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THE

# HISTORY

OF

# RAILWAY THIEVES,

WITH

# HINTS ON DETECTION.

BY

M. PAUPA RAO NAIDU,

*of the Madras Police.*

THIRD EDITION.

Madras:

HIGGINBOTHAM & CO.

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1904.

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M. PAUPA RAO NAIDU.

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To

THE HON'BLE MR. MURRAY HAMMICK, C.I.E., I.C.S.,

LATE INSPECTOR-GENERAL OF POLICE, MADRAS,

THIS BROCHURE

IS

WITH KIND PERMISSION

MOST RESPECTFULLY DEDICATED

BY THE AUTHOR

AS A MARK OF HIS HIGH ESTEEM AND LASTING GRATITUDE

FOR THE KIND APPRECIATION OF THE

HUMBLE SERVICES RENDERED

IN THE DEPARTMENT.

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# OPINIONS ON THE SECOND EDITION.

**By Lord Ampthill, the Governor of Madras.**

"I read your book. It is very interesting."

**By the Hon'ble Mr. Murray Hammick, C.I.E., I.C.S., Acting Chief Secretary to Madras Government and late Inspector-General of Police, Madras.**

"You have done a great deal of good work in connection with tracing out Railway crime, and I hope your book will be widely read."

**By the I.-G. of Police, L. P., Bengal.**

"The book is a good one and would be specially useful for the Orissa Districts and the Railway Police." This opinion was accompanied with an indent for 47 copies to be supplied to all officers under him.

**By the I.-G. of Police, Bombay.**

"The book has been advertised in the Bombay Police Gazette as a useful one for Police Officers."

**By the I.-G. of Madras advertised in the Police Gazette of December 10th, 1900.**

"This little book contains much useful information about certain sections of Criminal classes and the I.-G. commends it to the notice of all Superintendents, Assistant Superintendents and Inspectors of Police."

**By the Hon'ble V. P. Madhava Row, Councillor and late I.-G. of Mysore.**

"I have carefully read the book and have pleasure in stating that it is likely to be of great service both to the Police and to people travelling by Railway. You have treated the thieving habits of the Bhamptas of the Deccan and of the Ina Koravars of the South in an exhaustive manner. The chapter on the dishonest practices of certain Railway servants is equally instructive and the concluding 'Hints on Detection' from a Police Officer of your experience is sure to be of help to Policemen engaged in the investigation of crimes. I wish every success to your useful little book."

**By the I.-G. of Police, N.-W. Provinces and Oudh.**

"I am to request you to supply 20 copies for the use of this department."

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**By the I.-G. of Police, Hyderabad.**

"Kindly send me 7 copies of your book. If you have had the book translated, please send me 10 copies of the book in Urdu."

**By the I.-G. of Police, Mysore.**

"Request that 12 copies of the latest edition may be supplied to this office."

**By the Assistant I.-G. of Government Railway Police, Howrah.**

"Please send 10 copies to all the Railway Police Inspectors. List enclosed."

**By the District Superintendent of Police, Murshedabad.**

"Request he will be so good as to send 22 copies for the use of the officers in this District."

**By the Dewan of Pudukotta.**

"I have the honour to request that you will be good enough to send me a dozen copies of the book. I shall be willing to purchase a few Tamil copies of the same if they be available."

**By the Presidency Magistrate.**

"The little brochure should prove of great value to Police Officers in general and to the Railway Police in particular."

**By the Assistant I.-G. of Police, Madras.**

"It is very interesting reading and will no doubt serve the purpose for which it is intended, *viz.* a guide to those who have to deal with the predatory classes."

**By the Superintendent of Railway Police, Lucknow.**

"Your Hints on Detection are interesting and to the point."

**The Pioneer, Thursday, July 12th and 13th, 1900.**

An amusing and instructive little pamphlet on the subject of Railway Thieves, their procedure and the modes of detection has been published by Mr. M. Paupa Row Naidu, a Railway Police Inspector in the Madras Presidency. Although it deals mostly with the criminals of Southern India, the treatise may be found useful by Police Officers further north, while it is full of interesting and suggestive information for the ethnologist. * * * *

We should add that Mr. Naidu's pamphlet has also a chapter upon detection in which the Indian Policeman will find many useful hints.

**The Bombay Gazette, Saturday, July 21st, 1900.**

The History of Railway Thieves by M. Paupa Row Naidu (Addison & Co., Madras) is the title of a lively pamphlet, the second edition of

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which now appears. It is a well compiled description of the different classes of thieves, which direct their attention to Railway thieving and useful hints for their detection are evolved from the author's twelve years active experience in trying to circumvent their machinations. * * * * * *

**The Madras Mail, July 11th, 1900.**

Encouraged by the success attending the publication of his "History of Railway Thieves," Mr. M. Paupa Row Naidu has brought out a second and enlarged edition. * *

This little book is a very interesting one and cheap (8 as.) and is to be followed by another in which the Inspector intends to give the history of 17 other classes, who number many afflicted with criminal propensities. * * * * *

**The Madras Standard, July 21st, 1900.**

M. Paupa Row Naidu is an old hand at detection; and not only those who wish to be on their guard while travelling by rail, but all Police Officers who would excel in detection, will be glad to benefit by his long and varied experience. * * * * *

Mr. Paupa Row's hints on detection are useful and interesting, and in every way the book is well worth a perusal by all interested in Railways and Railway thieves. * * * *

**The Hindu, July 11th, 1900.**

Mr. Paupa Row Naidu is one of the ablest of our detective officers and his words on the professional thieves which it is his daily duty to hunt after, are therefore entitled to much weight. * *

**The East Coast News, July 25th, 1900.**

The book we are pleased to find contains a fund of information and should be translated into all the languages of South India and placed in the hands of every policeman, so that they may know who the professional thieves are; for the book gives directions and hints on detection. To a railway travelling public, it will be most useful as they will be in a position to beware of thieves. We would suggest that copies of the book should be exposed for sale at all Railway Book Stalls. We congratulate the author on his successful efforts to entertain and enlighten the reading and travelling public. * *

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# OPINIONS ON THE FIRST EDITION.

**By Col. Porteous, Inspector-General of Police, Maadrs.**

"There is much useful information in this pamphlet * *. It would be a good plan to divide the information more into sub-paras. or clauses and in margin to note subject of information of each para. * * The clearer it is given, the more likely is it to be viewed with favour."

**By Mr. V. P. Madhavarao, Inspector-General of Police, Mysore.**

"Mr. Paupa Rao Naidu, Inspector of Police, Gooty, is requested to supply this office with 20 copies of his Pamphlet on Railway Thieves with a bill of cost. The undersigned will be glad if Mr. Paupa Rao Naidu will kindly permit extracts from his book being translated into Canarese and published in the Mysore Police Fortnightly Circular."

**By Mr. W. J. H. Sullivan, Deputy Inspector-General of Police, Madras.**

"I have read the book through, and it seems to me to contain much useful matter. I will see what I can do to secure it a wide circulation in my range. I think the book should prove very useful to police subordinates, more especially Railway orderlies. I therefore hope that Tamil and Telugu editions of it may be published."

**By Mr. H. G. Young, Deputy Inspector-General of Police, Madras.**

"I am much obliged to you for your pamphlet on "Railway Thieves" Its compilation does you much credit. It is a most useful little book, and will, I am sure, prove of the greatest service to the Police employed in the prevention and detection of Railway thefts."

**By Mr. J. Meredith, Assistant Inspector-General of Police, Madras.**

"Accept my thanks for the copy of the pamphlet on Railway Thieves. I have read it with interest and profit. I think it should prove useful and I trust its publication in the *Police Gazette*, which the Inspector-General has sanctioned, may induce officers to purchase the Booklet."

**By Mr. T. Ponnambalam Pillai, Assistant Superintendent of Police, Travancore.**

"I feel thankful to you for your kindness in sending me a copy of your pamphlet on Railway Thieves. I perused it twice with interest, and I may say without flattery that I have been sufficiently profited by its perusal. I was under the impression that your experience was confined only to the Telugu Districts, but I see that you have collected valuable information not only from the Tamil Districts, but

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also from beyond the confines of the Presidency. It is only an experienced and talented detective that could separate the grain from the chaff. You are not new to us here. The Travancore Police have known you already in connection with the service you have done to detect the Cape Comorin Case, and this pamphlet has raised you in the estimation they had already formed of you. I have requested my chief, the Superintendent of Police, Travancore, to buy 50 copies for the use of the Department."

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**The Madras Mail.**

We have received a copy of a pamphlet on "Railway Thieves" by Madireddi Paupa Rao Naidu, Inspector of Police, Gooty.

* * * *

Railway thieving has become a science in itself, so much so that steps have been taken by Government to organise a regular staff of Railway Police for its prevention. The pamphlet under notice attempts to give an account of the life, habits and modes of committing crime of the criminal classes engaged in railway thieving. Professional railway thieves have been divided by the author into the four classes, *viz.*, (1) Bhamptas of the Deccan, (2) Ina Koravars *alias* Alagaries, (3) Bhatrajas of Piler and (4) Thetakars, or scissor thieves or pick-pockets, and to each class has been devoted a chapter. An interesting account is given in Chapter III. of the Bhatrajas who commit thefts while disguised as Brahmins. The author has brought to bear on the compilation of the pamphlet his departmental experience. The pamphlet has been well received by the Chief Officers of the Department, and cannot fail to be of use to all members of the Police Force, whose duty it is at all times and at all places to put a stop to the evil propensities of the thieving fraternity.

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**The Hindu.**

Mr. M. Paupa Rao Naidu, Police Inspector of Gooty, has written and published a pamphlet on Railway Thieves, not less useful than interesting, not only to the Police detective, but also to the travelling public. The author gives interesting accounts of professional railway thieves, of their caste and origin, and their movements and methods of committing crime.

* * * *

The pamphlet abounds in interesting descriptions, and the author throws out valuable hints for the Police and the traveller. It may be read with advantage by every Police official and by every one, in short, who has to travel by railway.

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### The Madras Times.

An interesting pamphlet on "Railway Thieves" has been written by M. Paupa Rao Naidu, a Police Inspector of Gooty, and is an exemplary attempt on the part of an intelligent native to write upon the things that are his own concern. It is a small pamphlet, and its composition, though by no means bad, might have had a bad quarter of an hour in an Editor's hands; but the matter is decidedly of interest, and together with the lists of the whereabouts of thievish communities when "at home," the pamphlet should prove of much use in the Police Department, especially if translated, as Mr. Sullivan, Deputy Inspector-General, suggests, into Tamil and Telugu. The pamphlet appears opportunely at the present time, inasmuch as railway thieving has of late been coming into especial vogue. British civilisation in India has put its foot on the highway robberies of old times and a criminal gang have but small chance now of entering into pleasant and courteous converse with a band of merchants travelling into a far country, and of suddenly strangling their companions at supper. But to make up for this, the railway has offered still fairer chance of success; and it is easy to imagine that under the cover of darkness, and in the sleepy hours of the night, when property is lying at large on the floor of a railway compartment or on a railway platform, a smart man, with confederates to help him, is not likely to go penniless. Professional Railway Thieves, says the author of the pamphlet, may be divided into four classes: (1) the Bhamptas of the Deccan, (2) the Ina Koravars or Alagaries, (3) the Bhatrajas of Piler, and (4) irregular gangs of *Thetakars*, or pick-pockets.

* * * *

Greater protection of property against the railway thief's handiwork is an eminently desirable thing, and the author of the pamphlet throws out hints on the subject. Though a subordinate, he is evidently one who knows, and that as a practical observer; and he maintains that the Railway Police, as it now stands, is too small to cope with the work all over the Presidency. It is an encouragement, therefore, to learn that the subject of increasing the strength of the Railway Police is under the consideration of the Government.

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### The Madras Standard.

The Inspector of Police, Gooty, Mr. M. Paupa Rao Naidu, has published a very valuable little pamphlet on Railway Thieves. The Inspector has devoted much attention not only in compiling it, but also in obtaining the necessary details from different parts of India. It is a very useful and instructive little book, instructive not only to the Railway Police but to the travelling public also. The author has placed the travelling public under a deep obligation, and it is hoped the Government will soon recognise his services in some tangible form.

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# RAILWAY THIEVES.

PROFESSIONAL Railway Thieves may be divided into seven classes, each class forming the subject of a separate section, thus:—

I. The Bhamptas of the Deccan.

II. The Ina Koravars *alias* Alagaries of Southern India.

III. The Bharwars of Gonda and Lallatpur.

IV. The Mullahs of Muttra.

V. The Bhatrajus or Bhattu Turakas of India.

VI. The Takka Woddars or Guntichores of Southern India.

VII. The Railway Pick-Pockets of India.

The first six classes form distinct communities, each with its own peculiar manners and customs, while the seventh, and another that might be termed 'The Railway Servants Thieving', have no such distinct communal character, but are composed of men of all castes and creeds, and of all manners and customs, the only common bond uniting them being thieving. It may also be said that the first three classes are special experts at railway thefts.

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# INTRODUCTION.

THE 'brief yet sweet' opinion of the Acting Governor-General Lord Ampthill, then Governor of Madras, that the book "is very interesting"; the kind remark that Col. Porteous, the late Inspector-General of Madras, then in office, put in officially regarding my first 'Pamphlet on Railway Thieves,' that "there is much useful information in it"; the strong suggestion of Mr. Hammick, the permanent incumbent then, embodied in his inspection report of the Vellore Police Training School, to the effect that it might with advantage form the subject of a lecture to the students there; the sincere request of Mr. V. P. Madhavarao, the then Inspector-General of Mysore, to be allowed to publish extracts from it in the *Mysore Police Gazette*, and his favorable review of the second edition since; the encouragement given to me by the late Mr. John Masters, Inspector-General of Police of Bengal, by an official order to supply all his subordinate officers with copies, giving an exhaustive list: these and other favourable opinions expressed or implied, alike by the public and the "Press", and the rapid sale of the second edition, have encouraged me in no small degree to bring out a revised edition of my booklet. And I gladly avail myself of the opportunity thus afforded to incorporate into the body of the work all my experiences as a Railway Police Detective, and as assistant to a special officer in the Central Criminal Intelligence Department, since issuing the second edition.

2. For much of the information appearing in the following pages, I am indebted to the kindness of Col. Porteous, who, often deputing me, when I was a Divisional Inspector of Gooty, to assist other officers in

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the investigation of heavy cases, opened up opportunities for me to come in contact with several classes of thieves and to know much of them. Besides, Guntakul, an important junction in the Presidency, through which these worthies must pass and re-pass in the ordinary run of their nefarious career, formed a portion of my division, thus adding one more facility to know about them.

3. But the idea of reducing this information, which I jotted down in my note books from time to time, to the form of a pamphlet fit for public use, was, I must own, suggested by the invaluable report about the Bhamptas of the Deccan, published in 1887, by Col. A. B. Portman, Superintendent of Police, G. I. P. Railway. I hailed the idea as good, fully believing that a pamphlet of its kind, presenting the history of all classes of professional railway thieves, particularly with reference to the places where they live and the manner in which they commit crimes all over India, cannot fail to serve as a simple and easy, yet valuable guide to every Railway Police officer, employed on the different railway lines, in the detection and suppression of railway thefts, which are of every-day occurrence. I therefore immediately set to work with zeal, nothing daunted by the labour it involved, in collecting as much information as I possibly could, regarding the abodes and hamlets of the several classes of railway thieves all over, their peculiar ways and methods of thefts, and subsequent artifices by means of which they avoid detection.

4. At first I issued the pamphlet in Telugu, to make it useful to those for whom it was intended in the main; but Col. Porteous, who had the kindness to send for and peruse the book, expressed it as his opinion, that, the pamphlet "containing much useful information," a reproduction of the same in English might be of great service to the Police officers not only of the Telugu districts, but also of

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the other districts. A suggestion like this, coming as it did from an officer of such unique and grave experience in the department, was in itself a sufficient inducement for me to undertake an English version of it and place the same in a rough shape before him. He not only expressed his approval of my attempt, but also offered certain valuable suggestions calculated to render the pamphlet acceptable to the public, to whom it will also serve as a safeguard, by keeping them sufficiently warned against the manifold tricks, by which these professional railway thieves often try to beguile and rob them of their property amounting at times to hundreds and thousands of rupees.

Though the information given in these pages comprises what I managed to collect during sixteen years' hard work put in as a Police officer, it cannot be pretended that it is exhaustive; there being surely much room still for supplementing and improving it.

5. In the first seven chapters, I deal only with men who have had a regular technical training, so to speak, in early life, and follow no other occupation than that of crime for a livelihood. An expert at the trade acquires such confidence in his own ability, that, not unfrequently from sheer love of adventure, he will undertake enterprises of the most difficult and dangerous nature; and on succeeding, as he often does, becomes the hero of his own gang and an object of admiration among his fraternity. This class hold very radical opinions regarding the rights of property; and their Law of Equity might be summed up thus:—

"Let him take who has the power,
"And let him keep who can."

It is no wonder then that the Police have so many difficulties to contend with in their dealings with such determined and lawless characters, who make "the flinty and steel couch of fight their thrice-driven bed of down." It is

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an established fact that the more vigilant and efficient the Police, the more active and cunning the thief; the wit of the one sharpens as it were the wit of the other. In the eighth chapter I deal with the Railway Servants in their relation to the public as the custodians of their property.

6. At the request of some of my friends and colleagues in office to relate some of my own experiences in the detective sphere, I have ventured to give in a separate chapter at the end, a few hints on detection as occurred to my mind in my limited experience, over and above what occasionally appear in the body of the work; and I think I have in that way supplied a longfelt want. For, I have often found, to my utter discomfiture, Police Station-house officers betraying their ignorance in the very rudiments of investigating a crime. They do not, in the first place, know how to question a complainant in order to come at the various circumstances under which an offence was committed.

7. Before going into the subject, I must gratefully acknowledge the valuable assistance I received in my attempt from Col. A. B. Portman, who has rendered his name famous in the Central Provinces by his unflinching exertions in the detection and suppression of railway thefts in the Deccan, and the invaluable suggestions and help had, while bringing out the second edition, from Mr. H. A. Stuart, the then Acting Inspector-General of Police, now Director of Central Criminal Intelligence Department, and from Mr. F. Fawcett, the then Superintendent of Railway Police, now the Deputy Inspector-General of Police. I must not omit to thank Mr. Ramanuja Pillai, late Head Constable in the Chingleput District, who gathered and noted down information of a very valuable kind regarding the Alagari gangs of the South. My thanks are also due to my friend Mr. Coka Seethayya

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Naidu, B.A., who has rendered invaluable assistance in bringing out this edition, while I was much engaged on official duty.

8. The seven classes shown in this pamphlet represent railway thieves pure and simple, inasmuch as they commit crimes in the trains, railway stations, and chattrums or hamlets attached thereto; but there exist also a large number of other classes who, though now and then resorting to railway thieving, extend their criminal propensities mostly in other directions. A description of some of these classes I have reserved for a separate book.

BEZWADA,
*5th November*, 1904.

M. PAUPA RAO NAIDU.

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BHAMPTAS.

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## CHAPTER I.

# BHAMPTAS.

Bhamptas and their residence.

REGARDING the Bhamptas, it must be observed that the best description of them has already been given by Colonel Portman, and it would be almost vain to attempt to better it except, perhaps, in a few minor details. The Bhamptas are a class of people who reside in the Deccan, chiefly in the Poona, Satara and Ahmednagar Districts of the Bombay Presidency, and who earn their livelihood as professional thieves and pick-pockets.

> "And live they must, and live they will!
> "On curséd mammon gotten ill."

Their other names.

They are known also by other special names in other places, *viz.*, "Takari" in Nasik, "Oochlya" in Satara, "Guntichore" and "Vadari" in Ahmednagar, and "Senoria" in some other districts of the Bombay Presidency. They are known as Bhamptas all over India. They exist in every province in India under different names, and travel over all the Railway lines. Their criminal propensities have acquired such a notoriety that in Northern India the word Bhampta has become a by-word for a thief, no matter to which class of thieves the particular individual belonged. Even so, the word Chain in Bengal or Capemari in Madras signifies a thief of no class in particular.

Original habitat.

2. As these Bhamptas talk broken Telugu, Colonel Portman thinks that they must have come originally from the Nizam's territories, or from some Telugu country; and this view of the eminent Colonel seems to be correct inasmuch as the house or family names of these men comprise words of Telugu origin, such for instance as Bhuminore (agricultu-[illegible]) Guvvanore (bird catchers), Munigalore (followers of

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Munisvara), Kaliputtinore (descendants of Kali), Pappanore (dealers in dhal), Panthipattinore (pig rearers), Yeddumoralore (merchants who carry their goods on bullocks), Goddalore (workers with axe), which are all derived from the Telugu words *Bhumi*, *Garva*, *Munisvara*, *Kali*, *Pappu*, *Panthi*, *Yeddu* and *Goddali*. They also talk Hindustani.

Their language and dress.

They talk and dress usually like the Mahrattas of the Poona and Satara districts. They have certain words and phrases which are known only to themselves. When engaged in the Telugu districts, they talk Mahratti and Canarese; and when in Mahratti and Canarese countries, they talk Telugu. They show certain signs by their eye-lids and fingers which are totally unintelligible to others.

3. They are, for the most part, Hindus, and they worship the goddess "Kali," the principal temple dedicated to her honour, to which they resort, being in the village of Konali in the Akalkote State, under the Political Agent of Sholapur; and there they frequently assemble in gangs, before and after their raids, to worship the goddess that luck may attend them, or for the success achieved.

Caste and form of worship.

4. It is impossible to bring them under any particular caste or creed. Excepting the low caste Malas or Chumbars, Madigas or Dheds, Ramosi and Mangs, they admit all castes of men from Brahmins to Boyas, and even Mahomedans but very rarely, into their community. Recruits are thus enlisted, and after being duly initiated into the mysteries of thieving, they become Bhamptas, and intermarry with the members of the community.

Combination.

5. The Bhamptas are sub-divided into two groups, *viz.*, "Jadaw" and "Gaekwad." These divisions are exogamous, that is, "Jadaws" do not marry with "Jadaws," or "Gaekwads" with "Gaekwads"; but the members of th[illegible]

Sub-divisions.

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divisions intermarry one with another. During their wanderings, they occasionally come in contact with women of bad character, whom they take as concubines and eventually treat as wives. If opportunity offers, they even kidnap young boys of all castes, whom they adopt and bring up to their profession. It is said that Chinya, a Bhampta Naik, adopted as his sons, (1) Metya of the Wani or oil-monger class from Guzerat, (2) Munya of the Marwadi class, (3) Mahadya of the Sutar or blacksmith class, and several other boys.

Crime before railways.

6. Before the introduction of railways, these people, like the Bauris and other leading criminal tribes, confined themselves to wandering about the country in gangs, visiting all large towns and villages, especially those where fairs were being held or any festivals celebrated, for the purpose of thieving and picking pockets. They had one remarkable peculiarity; their trade was carried on only by day, never after dark. With the opening of railways, however, having soon found out that thefts could easily be committed in trains, they quickly took to this new way of enriching themselves, and gave up their old custom of thieving only between sunrise and sunset, because they discovered that darkness favoured their designs on the persons or property of travellers; and it may be said that all successful thefts in trains are committed by them only during the night. As the different lines of railways are extending, they are also increasing in number every day, and spreading in all parts of India, committing their depredations.

Two Bhamptas as approvers.

7. In August 1884, Lieutenant-Colonel Brown, the Acting Superintendent of Police on G. I. P., obtained from Government, on his own recommendation, a conditional pardon for two Bhamptas, named Methya Chinya and Ranya Satwa, who made a clean breast of their profession from *alpha* to *omega*. It was only through the

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information obtained from these two men that his successor Colonel Portman, referred to in the introduction, was able to seize whole cartloads of stolen property consisting of various jewels, cloths, vessels, etc., of different places, from the houses of Bhamptas in the villages of Baburdi and Moragaon in the Soopha Taluq, Poona District. It was through these very men that Colonel Portman was able to collect their history.

Method of committing crime.

8. Their mode of committing crime is that about ten Bhamptas with one or two women start from home and split into two or three batches, after arranging to meet again on a certain day in a fixed place. On a newly-opened railway, they engage a house in some large town of importance, calling themselves railway contractors, and travel by turns during the nights, always taking care that the house is never vacant. Each batch of men go to a station dressed in some sort of disguise or in good ordinary clothes, taking a canvas or carpet bag, or at least a bundle with them, and purchase tickets for some place far or near. In their bag or bundle they invariably have one or two coloured turbans, two or three coats, a knife, a pair of scissors, a mirror, a chisel about six inches long and half an inch broad, a long tin-case of chunam, "Vibhoothi," "Namam" and "Sreechurnam," to put on different marks on their foreheads, a string of beads and a few old cloths. They also carry trinkets such as rings, bangles, buttons, nose rings, etc. of very trifling value, which their females expose for sale on road-sides to show ostensibly to the public that it is their means of livelihood. They will make the other passengers understand that they are on a pilgrimage to Ramesvaram, Tirupati, Hampi, Jagannadham, Kasi, Haridwar, or any other religious place on the railway line in which they fix their game. They look out for passengers also having bags which seem likely to contain anything valuable, and they follow such persons into the same carriage, and, sitting near, endeavour to

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enter into conversation, and ask them where they are going and at what station they intend alighting. After a time, when it begins to get dark, or, if it is already dark, the other passengers begin to drop off to sleep. Then one of the Bhamptas, on the pretext of making them more comfortable, lies down on the floor, and covers himself with a large cloth under the pretence of going to sleep, while his confederate, stretching his legs on to the opposite seat, spreads out his cloth, thus more or less screening the man lying beneath. This latter, when all appears quiet, begins manipulating the bag he has spotted under the seat, to feel with his hands if anything valuable is there, and if he cannot succeed in getting his hand into the bag, he takes from his mouth a small curved knife, which all Bhamptas carry concealed between their gum and upper lip, and with that he rips the seams of the bag and takes out what he finds. If the curved knife is not sharp enough to cut the strong canvas, he uses the other knife he has with him, and if the article spotted be a tin or wooden box, he makes use of the chisel in forcing it open, generally at the lock, and transfers the contents to his bag or bundle, or passes up what he had stolen to his confederate, and, at the next station, the two get out of the carriage, and either leave the train altogether, or get into another carriage. Should there be any complaint of loss, they throw away the things out of the window.

A stratagem.

9. If the passenger discovers the loss while they are still in the same compartment, suspects them and complains to the Police Constable at a Railway station, the latter searches their bags or bundles, finds no stolen property to be sure, and lets them off. Then they go back along the line and recover the property. Or, instead of cutting open the bag, they quickly, when the owner is asleep, exchange bags and sneak away at the first opportunity, and the unfortunate victim discovers what has happened only a little too late, perhaps on arriving at his

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destination, when of course he reports the loss to the Police, who naturally find great difficulty in tracing up the thief. If the passenger keeps his bag below his head, and is wary enough not to give them any scope in the train, they will also get down at the station with him, and as generally this passenger lies down in the station or choultry near it till morning, these Bhamptas go with him to the same spot, and misrepresenting to him that they are merchants from some place far or near, manage to sleep with him. During their conversation with him, they will inspire him with such confidence that he, taking them for honest travellers, relaxes his vigilance over his bag in proportion, nay more, feels positively happy in their company. They will then take the first opportunity to walk away with his bag in the dark, and will be several miles off before he goes and complains to the Police. Most of these budmashes have a notoriety for clearing at a stretch astoundingly long distances. These men will, as a rule, steal anything, however small in value, and it is needless to say that sometimes they make heavy hauls, much to the detriment of railway passengers. They also contrive to remove stealthily articles from the pockets of travellers purchasing tickets at the booking offices, as in the crowd the passengers do not notice what is going on, much less perceive who is the thief.

Another stratagem.

10. Bhamptas do not confine their operations merely to the railway which passes through their district. They also proceed in gangs on the Madras Railway, the Southern Mahratta and South Indian Railways, the Bezwada-Madras and East Coast Railways, the Great Indian Peninsular Railway, the Mysore and the Nizam's State Railways, the Bombay-Baroda and Central Indian Railways, the Rajputana Railway, the Bengal-Nagpur Railway, the East Indian Railway, the Oudh and Rohilcund Railway and others. They generally choose some line and

Lines of Railways to which they extend and their operations.

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start in a gang of about ten or twelve men with one or two women for some place on that line, and, fixing a central place as a rendezvous, proceed by twos and threes to prey upon the public, returning to their homes either after they succeed, or if they are afraid they are suspected, or when they are let off from jail. When returning with the booty, the stolen jewels will be secured round the waist of a woman, and she will travel in a female carriage. The stolen cloths will be concealed in bedding, which is generally carried by the men: but usually they send away the women in advance with all the valuables. When there is no female, the chief man will carry the jewels in his waist, under the disguise of a respectable contractor or a merchant.

An instance of their recent tour around India.

11. In the year 1901 just about its close, the people of Rajahmundry were startled by a series of thefts committed both in the Bazaar street and on the bank of the Godavari, the cases numbering over half a dozen in the space of about a fortnight.

Closely on the heels of these, came a clever pick-pocketing of about Rs. 10 committed on the station platform in broad daylight. Immediately that the complaint of this last case was received by me in my capacity of Railway Police Inspector, I went to work, and, suspecting that there was a professional gang located somewhere in the town or in its neighbourhood, I held a thorough scrutiny and with the help of the local officers, traced out a gang of nine Bhamptas and their women and children in three of the huts in the washerman quarters of Innespet about a mile and a half from the Railway station.

The three huts were immediately searched, when, besides a medley of trifling trinkets of all sorts, were found a few postal letters from their homes in Ahmednagar taluk received by them at Dharwar, Dond Junction, Allahabad, Calcutta and Khurda. These letters disclosed that they

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sent home several money orders and parcels including two watches, and that they were then on a tour through India starting in February 1901 from Dharwar where one of them had a conviction for theft. They then travelled through the Bombay Presidency to Dond Junction whence they sent some money orders. Then they had been to Allahabad wherefrom they sent two watches and some money. In June the gang reached Howrah, where a few of its members seem to have been bound over for good behaviour by the Calcutta Magistrate. In August the whole gang squatted at a hamlet close to the Railway Station of Khurda Road under the patronage of the village *Saraparakar*, who, falling in love with a young widow of theirs, connived at the questionable life of the gang, who committing a few thefts near Midnapur and Puri, some of the members were caught and convicted. The Police too got scent finally of their unwelcome presence at Khurda Road.

Finding the place thus becoming too hot for them, they came down to Rajahmundry, leaving the young widow to the Saraparakar's amours probably with the object of keeping up his connection with the gang.

The finger prints taken and sent to the different anthro centres elicited the above convictions in Dharwar and Calcutta that year.

Six of the men arrested at Rajahmundry were bound over for good behaviour by the Joint Magistrate of Godavari.

Their raids on the B. M. R.

12. It may be interesting to the readers to know an instance of their doings on the Bezwada-Madras line traced up by me in January 1900. A party of nineteen men and three women, belonging to the gangs of Rooyee, Karati, Poojeechivadi, Hale, Wadagaon and Konali, started towards B. M. R. The party split up into two gangs of eleven each. On their way they had good hauls, and Maniram and Byri with the two women named

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Manku and Ranu, returned to their places from Hyderabad with a large quantity of the property stolen. Of the remaining eighteen Bhamptas, eight men confined their operations to the Bezwada-Madras Railway and made Nellore their headquarters, while the remaining nine men and the woman Sunderabai chose the Nizam's Guaranteed State Railway as their field of operations, and made a good haul before they were all arrested by the Secunderabad Railway Police.

Their camp at Nellore.

13. The eight persons encamped at Nellore, hired a decent house belonging to one Inala Appayya Chetty at Santhapet, close to the Penner river, on the 11th December 1899, and called themselves railway contractors. From that day till the end of the month they kept travelling up and down, and ascertained for themselves at which of the railway stations there were no Constables, and which of the stations were considered to be important. Every night four of them went out, while the other four remained at home. On the 30th December they stole the tin-box of the Nazir of Amalapuram, Godavery District, which contained 28 rupees' worth of property. On the 2nd January 1900, some jewels were stolen from a passenger's bundle, but no complaint was lodged about the loss at the time. On the 5th January, a big theft involving a thousand rupees' worth of jewels, belonging to the wife of the Superintendent of Sangam Anicut, was committed between Nellore and Bezwada, and the complaint was made to me in person by the lady in sobs and cries. The wooden box from which the jewels had been removed was examined by me, and from the marks of a chisel or nail left on the lid at the lock, I was quite convinced that it must have been the work either of a Bhampta or of an Alagari. I took immediate steps to detect the case by tracing out this professional thief, and deputed Constables to the different stations to watch all the passengers closely, as this culprit must take train somewhere to reach his place of abode.

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One Bhampta, named Nathu, was caught at Sulurpet with stolen property as he was alighting from the train, the complainant who missed his property having been sharp enough to discover the loss and to complain at once. While he was being searched by the Nellore Station-house Officer, his three associates, who held tickets from different places, bolted from the platform in the dark, but were eventually arrested in the village of Tada. Their names are Gangaram, Nama and Maru. No stolen property was found upon them.

Successful arrests.

14. Before the 20th January 1900, no less than ten thefts were committed by them. On the morning of the 21st, two more Bhamptas, Rama and Bapu, with over 500 rupees' worth of property in their possession, were arrested by a beat Constable while they were dragging themselves along the road under the influence of liquor. The same evening another Bhampta, named Pakira *alias* Balaram, was arrested at Nayudupeta railway station by a Railway Police Constable. I presume that this man had evidently concealed all the property he had in his possession, and arrived at that station to go to Nellore to inform his other associates of the arrest of their comrades.

15. On the 25th January, when the train was about to start, the eighth man, Chendria *alias* Rama Chandar, got into the train at Nellore at 1 A.M., when a Platform Constable, suspecting him to be a Bhampta, and having no time to search his bundles, pointed him out to the two Constables of the travelling section in the train. These Constables, in their turn, conveyed the suspicion to the Station-house Officer of Bapatla, who was also in the same train, and he searched him at Bitragunta and found over a thousand rupees' worth of jewels and cloths with him. This man was perhaps leaving Nellore finally, as the place was getting too hot for the gang after so many arrests in quick succession.

16. As every one of them was going out of Nellore, and the thefts were being committed on both sides of

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Nellore, I was convinced that these Bhamptas fixed Nellore as their headquarters. On making a searching enquiry I learnt that the house of Appayya Chetti, referred to above, had been engaged by them, and as it was found locked, I broke the lock open in the presence of some witnesses, and found in the house a portion of the stolen property connected with four of the cases mentioned above.

Conviction.

17. In four cases the boxes were broken open with chisels. In two cases the boxes were carried bodily away. In two cases the railway bags were cut open, and in the remaining two the property was removed from bundles. Property connected with eight cases was traced to them, and the Head Assistant Magistrate of Gudur sentenced them all to imprisonment varying from one to four years.

The services of a boy utilized in thieving.

18. When thieving in towns and villages or on large platforms, the Bhampta is generally accompanied by a boy who watches and gives signals, draws off attention from the man and thus makes things easy for him. Not infrequently the boy is suspected and accused, and a hubbub is raised, during which the real thief makes off. The boy, when caught, is pitied by the other passengers or bystanders owing to his tender age, and upon their interference is let off with a slap or two. The boys are so trained from their very childhood that they will never betray their elders, nor will they give out their places of abode or the names of their parents.

Receivers.

19. Like other local thieves, the Bhamptas have their habitual receivers or purchasers of their stolen property. If they have made a good haul, they either send off one or two of the gang by road with it to their home if it is not far off, or dispose of it to a receiver. Sometimes valuable stolen ornaments are forwarded to their villages by parcel post, or the money by money order, the gang merely retaining money

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just enough for ordinary expenses, to throw suspicion off themselves.

Conduct when arrested.

20. When a Bhaupta is caught red-handed, or arrested on suspicion, he never gives his real name or place of abode, nor will he recognize or know aught of his confederates; and it is only by employing detectives and informers that anything can be ascertained regarding such men if made prisoners; but when confronted by those who know them, they generally confess their real names and places of abode. If they are called upon to give security for good behaviour or to go to prison in default, they usually telegraph to the head or Naik of the gang to which they belong, when two or three generally start off with money enough to save them from incarceration; but, of course, it often happens that sufficient money cannot be raised.

Rendezvous.

21. When a gang arranges a rendezvous on some line as already stated, it is generally at a point from two to five miles from the railway line, often in hilly, uninhabitable and thickly-wooded places. They often tarry in these places for considerable periods until they can gather sufficient booty, or until any of their gang, who may have been imprisoned, return from the jail. Till then they wait patiently, subsisting upon what the rest of the gang may manage to earn from day to day. To purchase provisions from shops in the neighbouring villages, one or two of them go daily in the morning, disguised as holy pilgrims to some great shrine like that of Tirupati or some other well-known place of Hindu pilgrimage. The disguise and imitation are so perfect that no casual observer would even dream of suspecting them, and unless every Police Constable or Village Magistrate makes it a point to question those travellers minutely and inquisitively, he will not be able to distinguish them from the other real and innocent pilgrims. That is how they hoodwink the Police and render

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nugatory all their intelligent resources to prevent crime. In the afternoons, however, they manage to go to a different village and spend a good time in drinking toddy, their favourite beverage, and arrack. When they go to these shops, they go separately and never claim any relationship, nor do they appear to recognize each other. When by chance a Police officer smells them out and takes them to the station, every opportunity will be sought to abscond or escape from him, even by resorting to force or by throwing sand into his eyes.

Frequenting liquor shops.

22. An instance of this actually occurred once in the Gooty Division. On the 26th of March 1893, a Police Constable, on some information, found (1) Pakira, (2) Ambaji, (3) Maruda, (4) Rama, (5) Tukaram, (6) Gunda, (7) Kristna and (8) Hanimi, a woman, beneath a tamarind tree in the hills situated to the north of the village Kasapuram, about three miles from the Guntakul Junction. He arrested them all under suspicion, and brought them with the assistance of the village folk to the railway station. On searching them, the usual articles, as mentioned in para. 8 *supra*, and Rs. 135 were found. When each man was taken separately and questioned as to their whereabouts, they differed in their statements. And it was not till they were threatened that they would be placed before a Magistrate for being bound over for good behaviour, that they gave their correct names. It was then found out that one of them, Rama, was no other than the railway thief who had been seized with property at the Royalcheruvu station about 35 miles from there on the 4th January 1893, and sentenced to two months' rigorous imprisonment by the Sub-Magistrate of Yadiki. Evidently they had been halting at the place till the return of that individual from the jail. It was with great difficulty that the woman could be made to admit her own connection with the gang. She persisted in saying that she had no

Forcible escape.

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connection with them, except that, having met them on her way to Hanumakonda, and having been requested by them to prepare their meals, she had been doing so simply to oblige her fellow-travellers. This led the Station-house Officer to suspect them to be a criminal gang, and he appointed a Constable to escort them to Bellary on the night of 27th March 1893. On arriving at Bellary, the Constable wanted them to follow him to the town police station in order to provide a fresh escort from there, and the party accordingly followed him a short distance from the railway station, when suddenly two of the Bhamptas snatched a quantity of dust from the ground and flung it into the Constable's eyes, and after thus blinding him, the males made the best of their way and could never be traced again. They vanished into the thin air as it were, seeming more like 'spirits at choice inhabiting this sooty form and leaving it at will' to disappear so suddenly and altogether. It is such exploits that electrify the Police sometimes. Poor man! the Constable, after recovering his vision, saw the woman alone standing before him, and all his attempts to trace the fugitives were in vain. I may here add parenthetically that this was not the first attempt that the Bhamptas made at escaping from the Constable. At first they had recourse to the milder form of offering him a bribe and other agreeable inducements, but failing there, they resorted to the harsh means explained above, and carried it out so successfully. If they had failed in this too, they would undoubtedly have tried another and more violent means of escape, even to the extent of making away with the Constable altogether, should a favourable opportunity have presented itself.

Division of booty.

23. On the return of a gang or party from a raid, all the property stolen is collected and divided, the Naik or headman getting his full share whether he has been out with the party or not. It is sometimes in these divisions that misunderstandings occur which enable the Police to obtain a clue.

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and, if there should fall out a chance of their being arrested, the Bhamptas would sacrifice one of their number, who, surrendering a portion of the stolen property, suffers imprisonment to save the rest, who are then left free to commit further depredations. Of course, the family of the man who goes to jail will be given another share by the rest of the gang, as is often done by other criminal classes.

Mode of search.

24. When Bhamptas are strongly suspected or seized, their persons should, in the first instance, be completely searched without leaving any portion of the body to go unexamined, and then their bags or bundles. When a Police Officer spots a Bhampta in a train or on a platform, he must observe (himself unobserved though) with great caution, who exactly are his followers, and try to net them all together and seize them by surprise in a body, so as to assure himself that the property in their possession does not pass from hand to hand till it disappears altogether. It is the failure to take this precaution that is the cause of many an abortive search of the Bhamptas. When all the members of a gang are netted and closely watched, the property must, as a matter of course, be found concealed either in some part of their bodies, or in some corner of the cloths they wear, or in the bags or bundles which they carry. In one case a female Bhampta had a currency note of Rs. 100 fastened on to her thigh with a piece of cloth as if she had a boil there. The woman deputed to search her person did not open the bandage, till she was directed to do so by the Police Officer on learning that she had a boil.

Observation necessary.

25. It has to be remarked here that keen observation is necessary in identifying exactly who constitute the members of the gang. They wear different disguises, and they are not generally seen together; and it is only by carefully observing their glances and general demeanour, that any connection can be traced between one member and another. This is the case not only on the railway



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platforms, but also in the villages to which the Bhamptas resort for the disposal of the stolen property. Generally, two or more Bhamptas of a gang go for the purpose; not all in a body. One or two go first, followed at a short interval by another, and then by a third or fourth, as the case may be, and while the first batch bargain, the others will be found loitering about in the neighbourhood, but at a safe distance from them, as if attending to some other business.

Patience recommended.

26. If a Constable happens to suspect the first batch, he generally begins with questioning them and ends with searching their persons, which show nothing. This is because the Constable is not patient enough to wait and observe the surroundings, or to find out who else have followed these suspected persons. If, on the other hand, the Constable can manage to keep his suspicions to himself for a time, observing carefully all what transpires, he is sure to mark one and all the Bhamptas coming to the place, and if search is made when all are there, the property will, as a rule, be found with the last comer. It is, therefore, only the last comer that can be of any use for the purposes of the Police, and unless the Constable waits till the last comer arrives, nothing can be found, as there is nothing on the persons of the others. In searching the houses for stolen property, every nook and corner should be examined thoroughly; sometimes property will be found buried a yard or more deep in the ground. Property is also concealed between double-built walls, and between beams and wall tops. Hearths and cooking places generally form the points of underground concealment, while the back-yards also are not unfrequently used for the same purpose. It is impossible to specify one and all the parts of the internal arrangement of a Bhampta house, to which search must be directed; but, above all, their persons should be examined as closely as their houses, as already hinted.

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How to search a Bhampta house.

27. The next matter to which particular attention has to be paid relates to the time and manner of searching the houses of the Bhamptas. As already stated, they generally live in a secluded part outside the main village, as do some of the other criminal classes. When the house of any particular Bhampta has to be searched, it is useless to confine the search to his house alone, as the arrangement of their houses is such as to facilitate the passing of property from house to house till it leaves the hamlet altogether. The first precaution, therefore, is to set Police guard all round the hamlet, so as to make sure that no property passes out of it before the search shall be completed. Very often females attempt to get away on the plea of answering the calls of nature, with the object of carrying away the property concealed in their clothes or in their private parts. After thus providing against all possible exit of the property, search must be carried out thoroughly from house to house throughout the hamlet.

When to search.

28. Though the Law apparently allows Police searches to be made in any part of the day, it has been wisely directed by departmental orders, with a view to obviate all misapprehension or suspicion against the Police in the minds of Magistrates, Judges and the public, that, as far as possible, searches should be carried out between sunrise and sunset. In the case of Bhamptas, however, it is not generally possible to make a successful search in the daytime. The fellows are always wide awake, and are too shrewd not to notice the approach of the Police in the day, and a moment's previous notice is sufficient for them to transfer whole lots of property beyond the pale of their habitations. The best plan, therefore, is to surround the hamlet before daylight and take them by surprise early in the morning. This plan was successfully adopted by me in a case.

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*List of places where the Bhamptas are known to reside in different Districts in the Deccan.*

| District. | Taluk. | Village. |
|---|---|---|
| Ahmednagar .. | (1) Parner .. | (1) Baburdi. |
| | Do. .. | (2) Hingoli. |
| | Do. .. | (3) Kangoli. |
| | (2) Kurjut .. | Sinda. |
| Nasik .. | (1) Niphad .. | (1) Ravalas. |
| | Do. .. | (2) Pipri. |
| | Do. .. | (3) Koondarwadi. |
| | Do. .. | (4) Jamb. |
| Kolapur .. | (1) Bage .. | Benduvada. |
| | (2) Niphad .. | (1) Gotkhandi. |
| | Do. .. | (2) Bahadurvadi. |
| | Do. .. | (3) Bhikhar. |
| Poona .. | (1) Indapur .. | Gondi. |
| | (2) Baramati .. | (1) Karati. |
| | Do. .. | (2) Bhutagaon. |
| | Do. .. | (3) Wudgaon. |
| | Do. .. | (4) Karanga. |
| | Do. .. | (5) Moorti Madwa. |
| | Do. .. | (6) Moroom. |
| | Do. .. | (7) Waki. |
| | (3) Bhimtadi .. | (1) Bamburdi. |
| | Do. .. | (2) Moragaon. |
| | (4) Haveli .. | (1) Bypurdi. |
| | Do. .. | (2) Wadu. |
| | Do .. | (3) Bhosree. |
| | Do. .. | (4) Bopukal. |
| | Do. .. | (5) Wadagaon. |
| | Do. .. | (6) Poojeechivadi. |
| | (5) Godnathi .. | (1) Kindal Pabul. |
| | Do. .. | (2) Kunnersar. |
| Sholapur .. | (1) Akolkote State .. | (1) Bhageli. |
| | Do. .. | (2) Konali. |
| | Do. .. | (3) Soordi. |
| | Do. .. | (4) Malvandi. |
| Satara .. | (1) Kodabgaon .. | (1) Rooyee. |
| | Do. .. | (2) Kanerkhed. |
| | (2) Kared .. | Oomruj. |
| | (3) Jamkhandi .. | Watar. |

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INA KORAVARS OR ALAGARIES.

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## CHAPTER II.

# INA KORAVARS.

Their description.

THE INA KORAVARS are a class of people who live here and there in the Madras Presidency, chiefly in the Trichinopoly and Chingleput Districts and in the Malur Taluk of the Mysore Province. They are professional thieves and pick-pockets, practising their trade in trains and at festivals and fairs. They are also called "Aghambadiars," "Alagaries," "Capemaries," "Vanniars," "Vellalars" and "Korava Poojaries" in the Southern Districts; while in the Ceded Districts and in the Northern Circars, they are known as "Santha-dongalu," "Rail-dongalu," "Mudusumarlu," "Kathiravallu" and "Pachipollu." With the extension of railways, the settlements of these criminal gangs have increased apace, so that they are now to be found more or less all over the country under some designation or other. In Bombay, Bengal and the United Provinces they have settled as pile curers and korava poojaries.

Origin and previous history.

2. The original abodes of this class were Pattukota in the Tanjore District, Thogamalai in the Trichinopoly District, and Sanjikota in the South Arcot District. The Thogamalai gang has lately removed to Edayapatti, a village two and half miles north of Thogamalai, where they call themselves "Uliakâra." Strictly speaking, they are Koravars by caste, known as Korichas or Erukulas in the Telugu Districts and Kykades in Bombay; but they gradually gave up all their connections with that class, and owing to their better associations and status in life, they pass themselves off for *bonâ fide* citizens, and forming themselves a distinct community, disclaim every connection with them. Before the days of the British Government and for several years afterwards, they were habitually com-

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mitting dacoities, robberies and other offences of a heinous kind. But since the introduction of the Indian Penal Code, several of the leaders of the gangs were transported or sentenced to long terms of imprisonment, and at one time the Ina Koravars were seriously afraid of total extermination under the rigour of the law. Seeing that the crimes to which they had been accustomed were visited with such severe punishments, the gangs met together in what they call "Kootams," to discuss the new criminal law as regards the degree of gravity with which it had dealt with serious offences against property and person, and resolved to give up their old crimes in favour of the milder forms of theft. But this new resolution was soon found not to pay them well if they confined themselves to their usual haunts; so they split into gangs and took to wandering over the country, visiting fairs, festivals and other places where people generally throng, for the purpose of thieving and picking pockets. After the opening of railways, they found, much to their delight, that thefts could easily be committed in the trains; so they took to this additional source of income, and have ever since been committing thefts on railways very successfully. But latterly owing to the efficient vigilance of the Railway Police and the particular care with which Mr. Fawcett, the then Superintendent, had been watching the movements of this troublesome class, they have not been so successful in railway thieving, and seem therefore to have taken again to their old habits of committing dacoities and burglaries.

On 2nd March 1900, a daring house dacoity was committed in the village of Agaram, Vellore Taluk, by a few Ina Koravars in collusion with some local Poligars, Talyaries and Vettians. As warrants were issued for their arrest, they migrated into Bengal and Hyderabad.

Their assumed names.

3. As already stated, they are really Koravars and, as such, used to eat any description of food—the squirrel, the crow being to

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them delicious. But by degrees, having become rich in the course of their criminal career, especially after the introduction of railways, they have assumed more dignified caste names and pass for a tribe of the Vellalars, calling themselves Aghambadiar Vellalars or Pillais, whose dress and manners also they have adopted to some extent. Ostensibly, to veil their criminal pursuits, a few of them cultivate lands, while a few others also take to doctoring, and these latter are generally considered to be experts in the cure of piles.

Religion.

4. In religion the Koravars are Sivavites and wear on their foreheads the horizontal mark of ashes which is the distinguishing mark of that sect. The worship of "Kali" and "Bethála," whom they call "Muneesvar," is also practised by them, but the deity worshipped as the presiding goddess of their profession is "Moothévi" the goddess of sleep, whom they dread and worship, male and female, more than any other god or goddess of the Hindu Pantheon. The object of this worship is twofold, one being to keep themselves vigilant and the other to throw their victims off their guard. "Moothévi" is invoked in their prayers to keep them sleepless while on their nefarious purpose bent, but withal to make their victims sufficiently sleepy over their property. This goddess is worshipped both by the males and females, but especially by the latter who perform strange orgies periodically to propitiate her. A secluded spot is preferred for performing these orgies at which animal sacrifices are made, and there is distribution of liquor in honour of the goddess. The Edayapatti gang worship in addition the deity known as Ratnasabhapathy at Ayyamala near there.

Marks on their persons.

5. Both the men and women wear tattoo marks of circular or semi-circular forms on their foreheads and forearms. When they are once convicted, they enlarge

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or alter in some other way their tattoo marks on their forearms, so that they might differ from the previous descriptive marks of identification entered by the Police in their search books and other records. During festivals they put red stuff, "Kunkuma", over the tattoo marks on their foreheads.

Recruitment.

6. They receive or purchase male or female children under five years of age from people of all castes except the inferior Mala, Madiga and the like, and bring them up in their ways. They then instruct such children in thieving and in the language of the community from their fifth year; and before the completion of their seventh or eighth year, these become sufficiently trained to practise thieving. The Koravars also admit women of other castes, excepting those above referred to, and keep them as concubines and wives, and the children begot on them are freely allowed the rights and privileges of the community without distinction. Adultery is very rife in this class, but a Korava woman will never under any circumstances give her person to a man of ordinarily good caste, a respectable member of society, lest the children so begotten might inherit any of their father's qualities, and thus prove unfit for the profession of thieving.

Marriages.

7. Marriages are performed under the auspices of a Brahmin Priest, with all the religious ceremonies observed by the low caste Hindus. When a Koravan dies, his widow marries his brother or some other relation, so that it often happens a man has at the same time two or three such women whom, however, he calls by different names of relationship, as it suits his convenience. Widow marriages are usually performed in the presence of their relations, when rice is cooked and distributed among them. There is no widowhood. A man may marry two sisters at a time. This is often done at Thogamalai.

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Mode of committing crime.

8. In their thieving excursions, the Koravars form themselves into small detachments, with one or two women and a trained boy or girl about seven years old in each, and every detachment proceeds to a particular village. To avoid observation they generally go through the jungles as much as possible until they reach their destination. In the villages if they happen to see children with jewels on playing about, the woman, or the trained boy or girl, will be sent to strip them off their jewels. They often go to wells and rivers used for bathing purposes, and very dexterously remove the cloths and jewels left on the banks and pass them on from hand to hand. They also enter the open houses and carry away things as they find convenient. At railway stations and other crowded places, where the elders cannot conveniently do so themselves, they make the boy or girl who accompanies them go and mix with the passengers, who generally do not suspect juveniles, and steal whatever he or she can. For, the Koravars presume that if the boy or girl is caught in the act of stealing, the natural softness of the natives will generally prevail, making them reluctant to hand him or her over to the Police, and that they will let go the juvenile offender with a slap or two on the cheek. As soon as they succeed in a theft, they carry the stolen property to an out-of-the-way place, and burying it there, defecate over the spot to divert the suspicion of the Police. In fairs and festivals, they make a clever use of their scissors in cutting loose small knots of money and jewels from the persons of women and children. They carry away bundles and bags of the spectator if they can do so conveniently, and when the bundles are borne on the person, the Koravars nicely abstract the contents by untying the bundles or slitting the bags. When merchants are busily engaged in their bargains, they carry away money purses and bundles of valuable articles from their shops.

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Thefts in fairs and festivals.

9. On occasions of fairs and festivals, the Koravars go in a gang and encamp in a tope at a distance of a mile or two. They spend the day in eating and drinking, and when night falls they get mixed up in a crowd and come into the fair or temple where, while the visitors are engaged in paying their devotions, the Koravars busy themselves in cutting away as many of their ornaments as possible, and leave the spot before the owners miss their jewels. Outside the temples, on pavements or on pials or under the shade of trees in temple gardens, where visitors generally sleep after visiting the temple, the Koravars go and lie down as if to sleep with the children, if any, close to the persons whose property they intend to steal, passing themselves off as residents of one of the neighbouring villages, and inspiring them, by their talk and manner, with a degree of trust and confidence.

Stratagems on platforms.

10. If, however, a wary spectator is found closely watching his property, so that it cannot be easily purloined, the Koravars post themselves on different sides close to him, and one of them, seizing a boy of theirs, gives him such a loud thumping that makes the boy cry so loudly as to divert the attention of the watchful spectator. Seizing the opportunity of this momentary inattention, one of the Koravars makes away with the bundle or other article of property nearest to him. If on re-directing his attention to his things, the spectator espies the thief, he naturally runs in pursuit of him, leaving his other things inadvertently behind, which in their turn are carried away by the remaining men of the gang present at the spot. When any of the bystanders happens to observe the Koravan, runs and attempts to seize him, the latter flings the bundle in his face, takes to his heels and thus eludes pursuit. Such deeds are generally perpetrated during the night, so that detection and identification of the thief becomes a matter of extreme difficulty, and conviction is

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rendered almost impossible. On occasions like this, when the thief is caught on the spot, and a Police Constable is not near to take charge of the criminal, the people take the law into their own hands, administer a sound thrashing and let him go. The Koravan expects such treatment as very likely, and goes fully prepared to take it as best he could. Before starting on their thieving excursions, the Koravars intoxicate themselves with country liquor, but not to such an extent as to lose their control over hand or head. May be they do this as much to rouse the devil lying dormant in them, as to deaden what little conscience there might still be left. It has been very aptly remarked that drink and crime have twinned at a birth.

Peculiar method of concealing small jewels.

11. All small jewels which the Koravars manage to steal are at once concealed in the mouth and even swallowed, if necessary. When swallowed, the jewel is next day produced with the help of a purgative. In this way a half sovereign, stolen by a Koravan, was recovered a few years ago, and the thief convicted by the Conjeeveram Sub-Magistrate. The women of this class also, like their Bhampta sisters, are clever in concealing small jewels in their private parts. The best way to find this out is to make the woman jump, so that the jewel may drop in the act of jumping. In this way, in 1882, at the feast of Kooram, a gold jewel ("Addigai") was recovered from a woman, and she was convicted. There are many women in this class with more than half-a-dozen convictions for thefts against each.

Ornaments and language.

12. The Korava women wear no gold or silver jewels, not even the gold tali, which is used by all classes of married women, as such jewels might serve for purposes of identification. They, therefore, prefer wearing jewels of brass or other inferior metal, ordinarily sold in the bazaars, and, instead of the tali, they wear a string of

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cotton, coloured with saffron. The Koravars can speak all languages of Southern India, and, in their intercourse with the people, they generally use the language of a particular locality, so as to pass for some peaceful residents of the neighbourhood. As a rule, they make friends with the Reddies or Munsiffs of the villages they visit, and with the grog-shop keepers in the neighbourhood. When arrested and asked as to their caste, they give themselves out as belonging to the "Palli", "Agamudiar", "Kavarai", "Idaiyan", "Palliyachee", "Reddi" or some such caste.

Things generally carried.

13. If searched soon after the commission of a crime, there will be found on the person of a Koravan a small knife or a sharp piece of broken glass which he often carries concealed in his mouth, a pair of scissors, an iron nail, two or three rupees in coin, a match box, and a few sets of clothes of different colours. The knife or glass is used for slitting open bags or bundles, the scissors in cutting off the jewels on the persons of women and children, the nail to break open the boxes, and the rupees for bribing the Constable who arrests him if he is open to such a temptation. As soon as a Koravan safely gets out with the stolen property, he hands it over to another of his class outside the crowd and changes his clothes so as to baffle suspicion. If the property be in the shape of gold or silver jewels, the man to whom it is handed over takes it with the match box to a pre-ascertained secluded spot in the neighbouring jungle, where there is already another man of the gang ready to melt it. Sometimes their receivers follow the Koravars in their thieving excursions.

Several modes of thieving.

14. Like the Bhamptas, the Koravars are experts in thieving on railways. They steal carpet or canvas bags, bundles or small boxes, not only on platforms and in ticket rooms, but also from railway carriages. They always carry with them a decent canvas bag filled with

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useless rags under lock and key, or a decent looking bundle of such rags. One of them taking this bag or bundle quietly near that of another passenger, places it close by for some time, as if he also were an ordinary traveller, but, at the earliest opportunity, quietly walks away with the other bag, leaving his own behind, which the traveller believes to be his own until the next day perhaps, when he attempts to open it. We all know what such delay means for a thief, and for the Police as to the chances of their being able to trace the property. If a favourable opportunity does not present itself at the platform, he manages to learn the destination of the traveller, and, purchasing a ticket for the same or some intermediate station, gets into the same compartment. Then again in the carriage, he enacts the same part contriving to place his bag as close as possible to that of his victim whom he watches until he becomes sleepy or otherwise unwary, and gets down quietly at the very next station with his bag. If the ticket happens to be purchased for a station farther off, he runs into the latrine and remains there till the train passes. If he is observed and questioned by the Railway officials or by the Police, he complains that he has missed the train, and feigning intense sorrow at the mishap, perhaps

> "Drops tears as fast as the Arabian trees
> "Their medicinable gum."

These Koravars cut open bags, break open boxes, throw away property from the carriages on the line, and change compartments or carriages after the commission of thefts, just like their Bhampta brethren; but for the most part their operations are confined to the platforms rather than the trains.

Further improvement in appearance.

15. Till very recently these Koravars have been travelling with only bags or bundles as mentioned above, but they now travel at times with steel trunks and put on

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a more gentlemanly apparel as a safer mask to their villainy. For they seem to have learnt that

"The apparel oft proclaims the man."

They use silk-bordered Conjeeveram or Coimbatore cloths, and their women wear Kornadu cloths and bodices. In a very recent search of their houses at Vembakampet near Trivellore, steel trunks were found in every one of them. In another search of their houses at Booggaletipalli near Cuddapah, in connection with a heavy theft at Guntakal, large quantities of silk and kornadu cloths were seized by me on suspicion along with the stolen property which was found in the hut of one Ponneri Narayana.

Peculiar expressions.

16. The household language of the Koravars is a dialect of Tamil, but as already stated they know all the vernaculars,—Telugu, Canarese and Hindustani. They are generally illiterate, though of late they have commenced sending their children to vernacular schools, so that some of the younger generation know how to read and write Tamil. In the presence of strangers they make use of certain expressions, words and signals, whose meaning is known only to themselves, on matters which they consider unsafe to be understood by others. Similar means of communication are adopted in the commission of a crime. The following are some of the terms used by them :—

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Valan or Mooli or Nayi | meaning | Constable. |
| Pothalu | ,, | Carpet or Canvas bag or bundle. |
| Polambi | ,, | Gold jewel. |
| Vadayan | ,, | Soon. |
| Vasare | ,, | Bring. |
| Voru kuppu | ,, | Give arrack. |
| Kulambu | ,, | Toddy. |
| Shadayan | ,, | Cloth. |
| Boothi | ,, | Children. |
| Chalamuti | ,, | Necklace. |

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| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Varipudu | meaning | Leave him. |
| Vangittuvanthan | „ | Previously convicted. |
| Keppathe | „ | Do not tell. |
| Peratu keppathe | „ | Do not give out your residence. |
| Shadayan irchiti ippico | „ | There is a cloth, take. |
| Valan varachiran malai rechutti varachuthu | „ | The Constable is coming, conceal the jewel by burying. |
| Mooli varachiran gendilé inchithi kanayam kuppettu engu | „ | The Constable is coming, escape by paying him the rupees you have. |

17. It is perhaps instructive to conclude this account of the Koravars with stating that the only effective punishment in their case is "durance vile", which works the more effectively the longer it runs. It has already been stated that the long terms of imprisonment held out by the Penal Code for dacoity and robbery have restrained the Koravars from those grave crimes and made them prefer the simpler forms of theft, and it might be hoped that if, even for these latter offences, such condign punishment as the law inflicts be rigorously meted out, the Koravars may, in time, be compelled to give up their criminal habits altogether, and settle themselves as peaceful people. A Koravan dreads imprisonment more than any amount of corporal punishment. With him,

Effective punishment.

"A felon's cell
"'S the fittest earthly type of hell."

When prosecuted for a crime, the Koravan invokes his favourite deity to let him off with whipping, in the following words:—"Adidhandanai vidhithal Ammanuku poojasaigarén," (*i.e.*) "If the punishment of whipping be inflicted, I shall adore the goddess."

18. In conducting the search of the houses and persons of the Koravars, the precautions prescribed in the case of the Bhamptas

Searches.

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should be observed, as these men also reside outside the main villages. Their women should never be allowed to leave the place till the search is completed. The woman deputed to search Korava woman should be sufficiently warned against all precautions that may be taken by them to baulk her attempt at a successful examination.

Cheating.

19. These Koravars, when they find their business slack at fairs, festivals and railways, go abroad with gilt jewels of good make and offer them to receivers secretly, by night, as real gold and so cheat them. These receivers do not generally complain of the deception practised to any of the authorities, for fear of being marked as receivers of stolen property.

Settlement in Northern Circars.

20. As I was editing the first issue, in 1895, a gang of about 20 Koravars, settled at Bheemasanki, a village within the station limits of Jami, Singavarapukota Taluk, Vizagapatam District. This gang consisted of members of the gangs of Vengudi and Vellirithangal in the Trivellore Taluk of the Chingleput District, of Chikavaram in the Malur Taluk of the Mysore Province, and of Edayapatti in the Kullitalai Taluk of the Trichinopoly District, all of which are shown in the Appendix. They were living there disguised as bricklayers and contractors. They gave out their places, names and house-names quite different from their own, but common to the neighbouring districts. For example, one Venkatasawmy of Edayapatti who was arrested with two others in the Vizagapatam town, gave out his name as Gopisetti Veerasawmy, the house-name 'Gopisetti' being one of the house-names of the Kapu or Telaga people of the Kistna and Godavery Districts. Most of the members of this gang have migrated into the Bengal Presidency. Some other Koravars of Cuddapah, Vembakampet and Malur have settled in Ellore and Narasipatam in the Godavery District. In January 1900, three money orders were sent by a Koravan to Vembakampet

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from Ellore, and a letter was received by him from his parents at Malur to the care of a poojari woman in Béstha-varpet. At Narasapuram, a family has settled as quack doctors for piles and boils, affording an asylum from time to time to the itinerant section of the community.

Their migration into Bengal.

21. While editing the second issue of this booklet, a large gang of these Koravars were to be seen in Cuttack and Poori Districts. At Cuttack some of them have since settled, advertising themselves as specialists in the cure of piles and fistulas. They move about in gangs in different directions, and, after making pretty good hauls, return to Cuttack and dispose of their booty. There they frequent the Pension lines, Jopra and Kothapeta. On 30th May 1899, during the Chandan Jatra at Poori, near the Narendran tank which is one of the holy Thirthams, a Korava woman was arrested with two silver bangles which she had removed from the person of a child, but she was sharp enough to fling the property into the tank, which is unfortunately too deep for making any attempts to recover the same. A good many railway thefts were committed on the Poori line in 1898 by these Koravars, some of which have not escaped the vigilance of the Police, who, be it said to their credit, succeeded in bringing several of the offenders to book.

Settlement in Northern India.

22. Some of them have since settled at Calcutta and Bombay and also further North as far as Delhi and Patna, as curers of piles and fistulas harbouring others of their class. It is only from Punjab and Sindh that we do not hear of these gangs, but from their recent adventurous conduct of spreading through Northern India, I have no doubt they will shortly be found in Lahore and other towns of Punjab as curers of piles and fistulas, affording as usual an asylum to their fraternity. Ten members, including the leader Kolavi Narayana of



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Vembakampet in Trivellore taluk, were arrested by the Police at Puri in February 1903 and were prosecuted under Sec. 110, C. C. P. They had all absconded from their village after the dacoity case at Ambur in 1900 referred to above, and settled themselves at Balianta about 5 miles from Bubeneshvar railway station. They were identified to be of the gang by my Constable deputed to see them.

An extract from the report of the Inspector-General of Police, Bengal, may here be given as an authority on the subject of their extension :—

"Cognate with the Kapemaries is a class of Korava Pujaries (as they call themselves in their own village) who, emanating from one little hamlet (Pattukotah) in the Tanjore District, are spread more or less over India. There are or were until the other day, and probably are still, some of them in Cuttack, Balasore, Midnapur, Ahmedabad, Patna, Bombay and Secunderabad and in other places. One of them Parasuram by name attained a high position in Bombay. Their ostensible profession is curers of piles and fistulas; but it is noticeable that sooner or later after taking up abode at any place, the Kapemaries are to be found somewhere near; and the impression, which is not quite a certainty, but very nearly so, is that they play the convenient rôle of receivers of property stolen by Kapemaries. One of these Korava Pujaries, Thyagaraja Pujari by name, has for some time resided in Bow Bazaar, Calcutta, where he is known as Kasiram. Their residence at any particular place as well as their members fluctuate. Curers of piles and fistulas hailing from the Madras Presidency should be watched and look-out maintained for their brethren and allies, the Kapemaries, who are arrant and most persistent thieves, men, women and even young children."

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23. About thirty years ago, a colony of these Koravars related to those of Vembakampet, settled themselves in Sreerangapuram in Warangal taluk of the Nizam's dominions, and are nominal landlords there owning a few acres. They usually leave the old women and the young girls at home, and themselves keep moving all over India. There are about a dozen families with about 20 acres of dry and barren land in their names and a few oxen. A gang of them generally consists of about 10 male members who always move about with a few adult women. Besides being professional railway thieves, they make counterfeit coins in baked moulds of mud. The metal they use being stronger than that used by the Chupperbund Fakirs, they are able to utter these base coins much more successfully.

Settlement in the Nizam's dominions.

*List of places where the Ina Koravars or Alugaries are known to reside in the different districts of the Madras Presidency.*

| District. | Taluk. | Village. |
|---|---|---|
| Chingleput .. | Trivellore .. | (1) Vembakam. |
| | | (2) Arunachala Chattram. |
| | | (3) Sirigadai. |
| | | (4) Kandankolle. |
| | | (5) Vengudi. |
| | | (6) Vellirithangal. |
| | | (7) Sevapet. |
| | | (8) Pappanambakam. |
| South Arcot .. | Chidambaram .. | (1) Maryankuppam hamlet of Tachakadu. |
| | | (2) Porto Novo. |
| Trichinopoly .. | Kullitalai .. | (1) Edayapatti. |
| Cuddapah .. | Cuddapah .. | (1) Booggaletipally. |
| Pondicherry .. | Pondicherry .. | (1) Kummersempet. |

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*List of places where the Ina Koravars or Alagaries are known to reside in the different districts of the Madras Presidency*—(continued).

| District. | Taluk. | Village. |
|---|---|---|
| Mysore Province... | Tumkur .. | (1) Gunigal. |
| | Malur .. | (1) Chikavaram. |
| | | (2) Gudnahally. |
| | | (3) Boppanahally. |
| | | (4) Mathanahatti. |
| | | (5) Abbehalli. |
| | Bangalore .. | (1) Bangalore. |
| | | (2) Alusur. |
| Malabar .. | Palghat .. | (1) Ellepally Amsham. |
| | | (2) Thanary. |
| | | (3) Kothiampakam. |
| | | (4) Pedanathy. |
| Vizagapatam .. | Singavarapukota .. | Bheemasanki. |
| Godavery .. | Ellore .. | Ellore. |
| | Narasapuram .. | Narasapuram. |

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BARWARS.

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## CHAPTER III.

# BARWARS.

THE Barwars are a class of criminal fraternity reputed much for pick-pocketing in bathing ghauts, fairs, festivals, choultries and railway stations, moving all over India under some disguise or other as their Bhampta brethren of the Deccan.

Their origin.

2. They are said to have sprung from the Kurmis of Patna and its neighbouring districts, but have subsequently split into two major divisions, one going towards the North into Gonda, Berially, Sitapur and other places, and the other towards Lalitpur and Bilaspur of the Central Provinces in the South. Those that went towards the North are called Barwars and those that went towards the South, Sanorias. In them again sub-divisions have been formed, members of the original tribe being distinguished by the name Sowang and those who have been recruited from Bengal and elsewhere being styled Gulams and their servants, Tilarsi. Those that went towards Gonda intermarried with their Gulams, whereas those of Berially and Hardue have not. Hence there has been a split among them. As for those of the South, there seems to have been no such sub-division except their migration to different places. Of those in the North, the Gonda gangs have been brought under the provisions of the Criminal Tribes Act; and of those in the Central Provinces, they that settled at Lalitpur have been subjected to that Act.

3. According to the version of the Bengal Police Officers, who seem to pay more attention to this tribe than the officers of the other Presidencies, the Barwars worship Debi and Mahabir and call themselves Hindus, but reverence also the Mahomedan Pir Syad Salar Musa-ud-Ghaji and

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visit his tomb at Baraitch. They obey omens, and will turn back from an expedition on merely meeting a Government official.

Modus operandi.

4. Men of all castes, except a few of the very lowest, are admitted by initiation into their confederacy. Boys used to be kidnapped from Bengal and elsewhere; but they have now abandoned this practice, as the punishment proclaimed for such offence is very severe. They use a peculiar slang or Farsi. By its means and by the use of certain signals, they secretly communicate with each other and facilitate thefts. They never commit crimes involving violence, such as dacoities, and were known to be committing even the simple thefts only between sunrise and sunset; but latterly some of them have found out that darkness favoured them more in their designs. The men, women and boys all commit theft by strategy. Lately there was an instance in which two young men in the disguise of *Sadhus* were convicted of a heavy burglary at Vijayanagaram in the Madras Presidency.

A young boy is so trained to the trade as that he is easily guided in his actions by signs made to him by a proficient in the art. Immediately he lays his hands on any property, he passes it to a strong fleet man who is near and who conveys it to a third person on the road leading to the secure retreat of the gang, about two or three miles from the railway station or other scene of the offence. Soon after the commission of a crime they move with all possible haste to a distance.

Their women.

5. The women all resort to the nearest fairs and festivals. They wear rich dress and deck themselves gaudily with jewels, and join parties of other women going into a temple; and, while the latter are engaged in offerings and prayers and are intense in their devotion, the former with great dexterity remove from their person the jewel or jewels they could

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conveniently lay hold on. Their sleight-of-hand is so perfect, that the thing escapes the observation of the women robbed, who, for the time being remain utterly unconscious of the robbery on their person. Even earrings, noserings and necklaces, which are rather difficult to remove from one's person in such circumstances, are not safe from these robber women.

Their disguises.

6. They keep their faces veiled and often disguise themselves as Brahmin women to avert suspicion. The men often disguise themselves as *Sadhus*, and their *modus operandi* of thieving is much the same as that of a Bhamptá in trains and at railway stations. They throw away stolen property more frequently than the Bhamptas, through the windows of the railway carriages; and get down at the next station to go and pick up, or send accomplices to pick them up. In the constitution of gangs, in the selection of halting places, and in all what they do to facilitate their criminal designs, the Barwars are very like the Poona Bhamptas already described.

7. They claim Brahmin origin and wear sacred thread and make no secret of their trade. They even defend it on *quasi* religious grounds, quoting the Hindu proverb, that surely it is a gain and no loss to be robbed by a Brahmin.

In the Bengal Police Code their history is given with a list of the villages where they reside, with strict orders to watch them at all the Railway Junctions, during the special seasons of festivals at Gya, Poori and other important religious places. When Barwars are arrested they frequently name some places of Nepaul as their homes and give wrong addresses.

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## CHAPTER IV.

# MULLAHAS OF MUTTRA

OR

# CHAIN MULLAHAS OF BALLIA.

THIS is also a criminal gang of pick-pockets and Railway thieves, living at present mostly in the Muttra district. They are called Chain Mullahas of Ballia, because they are reported to have been formerly residents of the Ballia district; and the word Chain denotes a thief or a pick-pocket. About this gang special enquiries were instituted under orders of the Inspector-General of Police, by the Superintendent of Railway Police, Mr. H. de L. Ross of the United Provinces. His memo. is exhaustive and interesting enough to be published in original, and it runs thus:—

2. Mr. L. C. Porter, Magistrate and Collector of Muttra, whilst inspecting the Shergarh police station of that district, had his attention drawn to the Mullahas of Muttra, and wrote the following remarks in his inspection note of the 18th January 1900: "There is a curious colony of Mullahas at Singara and Chamagarhi. They make a living entirely by looting in Bengal. A Thakur who finances them has a shop, ostensibly for cloth selling at Calcutta, and the Mullahas visit him there and loot right and left. He remitted home Rs. 1,500 lately. One was arrested lately at the Magh Mela and identified here. The Calcutta police should be communicated with, and full particulars given them about Daulatta (the Thakur in question)."

Subsequently the Inspector-General of Police, in his administration report for the year ending 31st December 1899, remarked on the Chain Mullahas of the Ballia district and their connection with Bengal and Muttra. Enquiries

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were accordingly instituted in the Muttra district, which resulted in the following particulars of these people being obtained :—

Their habitat & origin.

3. The Mullahas of the Muttra district are to be found in the police circles of Muttra, Mahaban, Rayah, Bindraban, Mat, Surir, Nohjhil, Majhoi, and Shergarh. They call themselves Thakurs, and state they have no relationship or connection with Dhimars and Kahars, and believe they were formerly residents of the Ballia district, but that nothing is now known by them as to when this was or when their ancestors first came to Muttra. Certain of the Muttra Mullahas say their forefathers came to Muttra more than a century ago from Delhi and Gurgaon, and that there are still several of their caste fellows in those districts, some of whom are zemindars; but the Muttra Mullahas, whether originally from Ballia or elsewhere, deny any connection with the present Mullahas of Ballia, whom they look down upon as their inferiors owing to the Ballia Mullahas taking service as, and doing the work of, Kahars.

The Mullahas of Muttra cannot be said to be a professional criminal tribe; in places they are engaged in cultivation, as found in several small *naglas* of the Nohjhil and Majhoi police circles; but those of the Shergarh, Surir, Mat, and Rayah police circles have adopted the profession of pick-pockets (*uthaigiri*) and engage in this occupation at all large *melas* as well as in cities and towns.

As far as it could be ascertained, certain Mullahas have followed this calling for years and do nothing else, but beyond petty thieving they are said to commit no serious crime or burglaries, and for the purpose of *uthaigiri* visit all the large fairs in these provinces, such as those at Allahabad, Hardwar, Garhmuktesar, and exploit the Punjab as well. Their greatest success, however, is met with in Bengal, where, they say, they have greater opportunities and less difficulties to meet.

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4. The Mullahas of the Agra and Aligarh districts are also said to follow the same calling.

Their *modus operandi*.

No particular "slang" expressions or language is made use of by them or disguise adopted when out on their predatory expeditions. They generally go about in small parties of four or five with two or three boys, each party having its recognised leader, who is responsible for the daily expenses of the party as well as for the maintenance of the family members of the gang left behind.

They travel by road as well as by rail, and whilst in cities and towns, steal whatever they can lay their hands on, and dispose of such things in villages on their way, pretending at the time to be starving and in want of money.

When the Mullahas travel by rail they commit petty thefts, mostly pick-pocketing at railway stations, particularly when passengers are collected in a crowd round booking offices and exit gates, and on occasions as opportunities offer they make themselves useful to passengers, promising to look after their things whilst the passenger is occupied in purchasing his ticket, the result being that the too confiding traveller never sees his things again.

It is said that one of the Mullahas sometimes assumes the garb of a *Sadhu* and sits at night in a *musafirkhana* (passenger hall) at train time, with smoking materials near him. The other members of the gang appear before him as strangers, and are given a free smoke. This does not escape the attention of the bystanders awaiting trains, and they soon join in the circle round the friendly *Sadhu* enjoying a free smoke, which probably saves them one pice, but the other Mullahas do not waste their opportunities, and generally manage to relieve their unsuspecting victims of some of their possessions.

Their strategy.

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5. In this manner they proceed on their journey Calcutta, calling themselves Thakurs or Banias, and ne giving their correct residences or castes. If one of number should have the misfortune to be arrested, the make every endeavour through monetary means to o his release, and, whether successful or not, they proceed on their journey.

On reaching Calcutta, which they are familiar with, t rent a small place, posing as strangers in search of empl ment, and to avoid suspicion being raised as to their r calling, their residences are changed very often.

Whilst in Calcutta they do nothing else but *uthaigiri* a dispose of their stolen goods through certain shopkeepe or *kabaris* who are known to them as habitual recei ers stolen property.

Their Receivers.

6. For many years past one Daulta, Thakur, of *na* Mahria, police circle Surir, has been the habit of visiting Calcutta eve cold weather, which is the time of the year the Mullahas Muttra are generally to be found there. This Daulta take with him coarse cloths, such as *dohars* and *mirzais*, whic sells to the labouring classes, and on this pretence star a shop, thereby assisting the other Mullahas in disposi of stolen property. The Mullahas of Muttra, it is said, do not remit money direct to their homes by money orders, but to different persons through different post offices.

It is learnt that at one time Daulta purchased graph, which he hired out to other Mullahas, eans of this instrument, managed to collec nd them, when the boy Mullahas busied the pockets of the gaping and wonderi

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ve out that they made their livelihood at Calcutta by arging a small price for each tune.

Mullahas of Aligarh and Agra are also said to visit ombay Presidency.

The Muttra Mullahas when arrested, whether on railway or in Calcutta or elsewhere, always give their ng names, castes, and residences, and generally get off h a light punishment, as few magistrates or police icers consider it necessary to verify their antecedents. nce the finger impressions of the Muttra Mullahas, who ad been suspected of visiting distant places for the purpose f crime, were taken and sent to Calcutta and Allahabad, ith the result that few, if any, convictions were reported om Allahabad, but in some instances Calcutta reported ve or six.

It is found that the greater number of sentences passed in engal on Mullahas of Muttra were unknown at Allahabad r Muttra, and consequently the police of these provinces were ignorant of the criminal history of these people, which prevented heavy sentences being passed on them, as the *mouzawar* registers generally gave them a clean record.

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BHATRAJA OR BHATTU TURAKA.

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## CHAPTER V.

# BHATRAJAS

OR

## BHATTU TURAKAS OF INDIA.

THE Bhats are the genealogists and family bards of India, and are, rather were, tolerably well-to-do and respected class of men therefore. Many classes of these Bhat Brahmins there are in different parts of India, who earn their livelihood by honest means doing their legitimate duties, and have nothing of criminality about them.

Others there are, who have irretrievably fallen from the high pedestal of their time-honored functions, and who are described by Mr. Nesfield as 'rapacious and conceited mendicants, too proud to work but not too proud to beg.'

Some of the other criminal classes assume that name to pass for beggars while they go on committing crimes all over.

It is with the doings of these criminal Bhats that this brochure is concerned.

Mr. West says that in Eastern Bengal 'during the Durga Puja they force their way into respectable houses and make such a horrid uproar by shouting and singing that the inmates gladly pay something to get rid of them.'

2. The sub-castes known in Bengal are 'Baram-Bhat,' 'Raj-Bhat' and 'Turk-Bhat.'

The Turk-Bhats abound at Sailkot in the Punjab and are probably of Mahomedan origin. Thus it is a fact that there are Turk-Bhats or Bhat-Turakas in Punjab, Bengal and Madras. All these three classes may have had some common origin.

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In the Central Provinces too, the Bhats have been clearly identified with the Khanjars or Sansias of Northern India. They are the most desperate dacoits, and wander about the Deccan as though belonging to the Gujarati Domharies or Showman.

In the Madras Presidency, there is an honest class of Bhatrajas among whom there existed in times of yore many good poets. Even to this day we come across educated Bhats who are able to compose Telugu or Sanskrit verses just on the spur of the moment, whenever they have to praise a donor who treats them liberally and with respect. But alas! Even this tiny spark of India's greatness is fast dying out through want of encouragement in these days of keen competition for Government employ—and the few educated Bhatrajas there are, are but paupers.

Their permanent residences.

3. The criminal class of Bhatrajas called also Bhattu Turakas live in gangs in the villages of (1) Yenumulavandlapalle, (2) Kambamittapalle, (3) Yellalavandlapalle and (4) Erraguntlapalle, which comprise the revenue payakat village of Agraharam in the Piler Division of the Cuddapah District, and in the villages of Aravavandlapalle and Mekalavandlapalle of the Chendragiri Division of the North Arcot District. They are treated as criminal gangs by the Police of the above districts, and the long and protracted absence of their male members is a significant feature always noted down by the Police as affording a valuable clue to the detection of their crimes. In the other parts of the Presidency very few Police officers know about them, though their existence, and the mode of their operation are published in P. W. C. of 1881, and elsewhere.

*Modus operandi.*

4. About ten or twelve men start from their homes, and, splitting into gangs of four persons each proceed to carry on their operations. They are often absent for months together from the

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villages, sometimes going very far to commit thefts. Each batch arranges with the others to meet at a certain place on a certain day. The men composing each batch dress themselves like a particular sect of Brahmins and carry a bundle or bag containing "Rudratchamalas," "Thulasimalas," "Saligramams;" copper vessels called "Chemboos," "Panchapatrams," "Uddarinas" and plates; and cloths known as "Naramadies" and "Pithambarams" used by Brahmins at the time of making pooja. They know a few principal mantrams generally recited by all sects of Brahmins. It is difficult to say exactly to what particular caste they belong, but they appear to be like so many Madhvas, Smartas and Vaishnavas. They know a bit of Sanscrit, and cleverly imitate all the outward rites of Brahminism, such as "Sandhyavandanam," "Lingarchana," etc. They wear sacred threads on their shoulders as Brahmins do, but at times they secrete them in their waists as occasion requires. Thus equipped, they confine their depredations to the Tamil districts, where they pass for rude Telugu country Brahmins. In the Telugu districts, however, their imposture is easily discerned, and hence the fear of appearing there.

Manner of disguising.

Imitation of Brahminism.

It is during festivals and feasts that they very often commit thefts of the jewels and cloths of persons bathing in the tanks. They are thus known as "Kolamchuthi Papar," meaning thereby that they are Brahmins that live by stealing around the tanks. Before the introduction of railways, their depredations were mostly confined in this way to the choultries and tanks.

5. The parties that so split to meet at a certain place on a certain day, have very peculiar modes of communicating with each other. The most important of them all is by means of their leaf platters which they stitch in a

Peculiar means of communication.

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particular manner, and throw after use in a certain place, previously arranged, and pin them to the ground with stones. These leaf platters can easily be recognized as belonging to them if properly examined, for, there will be a difference in stitching from the common bazaar leaves. An expert happening to come across such platters at any place is sure to find Bhattu Turakas in its neighbourhood.

6. To illustrate their mode of thieving, the following six instances, which were given in P. W. C. of 1881, are reproduced here :—

(1) A native gentleman on arrival by rail at Vellore, found himself waited upon by four exceedingly respectable Brahmins (Bhatrajas disguised) who helped him with his luggage and helped themselves to his carpet bag.

(2) Four Brahmins (Bhatrajas) took up their abode in a native hotel in Vellore, and after a stay of two or three days disappeared with the whole of the landlady's jewels.

(3) A Brahmin mendicant sought and obtained accommodation in the house of one Ayyavier of Katpadi, but he showed his hand too soon, and was accordingly turned out by his host before he had an opportunity of doing business.

(4) Four Madhva Brahmins (Bhatrajas) with "Mudras" well marked on chest, and with fans, entered the house of a native official at Chittoor during the celebration of a marriage. After partaking of their host's hospitality, they partook of his property to the value of Rupees 400. They were pursued, arrested with the property and convicted.

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(5) Three Siva Brahmins lodged in a choultry at Trichanoor with some rich pilgrims from Madras. During the absence of the pilgrims at the temple, they decamped with a box containing Rs. 1,000 worth of property.

(6) Two Vaishnava Brahmins were noticed by a Komati of Cuddapah District, who was staying in the Mahant's choultry at Tripaty, to be paying too much attention to his property. He raised an alarm and the so-called Brahmins (Bhatrajas) took to their heels.

Engagement as servants.

7. Another mode of thieving is, that one of them gets engaged as servant to some rich man, and the others remain in the village hanging about him, even for months, before the servant gains the confidence of his master to such an extent as to find access to some valuable property; and then they all walk away with the property.

Facility to thieving.

8. In choultries and on platforms they put on a very respectable appearance, and, like the Bhamptas and the Koravars, they substitute their bags filled with rubbish for those of the passengers which they carry off, or, often carry them off with no such substitution even. These Bhatrajas in their disguise as Brahmins have greater facilities of access to the passengers than their brother thieves, and are therefore more successful than they in committing thefts with less chances of detection. That is why we find very few of this class convicted for thefts on the railways. Their women were never accused of thieving.



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Division of spoil.

9. When arrested by the Police, they give false names of themselves and of their villages. If, however, they are fortunate enough to return safe to their village after a raid, the spoil or sale proceeds thereof will be equally divided among the members of the whole gang, a double share being taken by the actual thief in each case, as is usually the custom with most other criminal gangs.

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CHAPTER VI.

# TAKKU WODDARS

OR

## GUNTICHORES.

THE word Takku (tricky) is an epithet sufficiently intelligible in itself to show that the Woddars to whom it is applied here are false, cunning and deceitful.

Their several classes.

There are several classes of these Takku Woddars, known by different names in different places, and forming distinct communities:—

In the Ceded Districts, they are called 'Takku Woddars' generally: in Mysore and the Nizam's Dominions, 'Donga Dasaries'; in Nellore, 'Kathiras'; and further North, 'Pachapas.' In the Southern Districts of the Madras Presidency, they are known as 'Goodoo Dasaries' and 'Thetakars.' All over the Bombay Presidency they are called 'Guntichores.'

They call themselves 'Thota Balijas,' 'Poosala Dasaries,' 'Jathipallis' and so forth according to the *professions* that they ostensibly follow to serve as a cloak to their villainy, and claim to be treated as people belonging to a Vaishnava sect of mendicants.

But according to the *names* given to them by the public, they may be divided as follows:—

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Takku Woddars. | 8 | Nakkalavallu. |
| 2 | Donga Dasaries. | 9 | Erragollalu. |
| 3 | Kathiravallu. | 10 | Dumpa Chenchus. |
| 4 | Telaga Pamulavallu. | 11 | Goodoo Dasaries. |
| 5 | Peddeti Gollalu. | 12 | Thetakars. |
| 6 | Pachapavallu. | 13 | Jathipallis. |
| 7 | Parikimuggulavallu. | 14 | Guntichores, etc. |

Though to start with, there may be no blood relationship between any two of the above divisions, I have no doubt

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that a few days' association with one another in their common nefarious attempts brings about the matrimonial connections also. It all depends more on the success achieved by the gang than on any caste scruples.

Origin.

2. All the above divisions are of Telugu origin and speak Telugu, though those that settled in the Tamil and the Mahratta countries are conversant with Tamil and Mahratta languages also. And there can be no doubt that the parent stock for all these criminal gangs is the hard-working class of Woddars who toil for their bread all the live-long day,

'From morn till noon, from noon to dewy eve';

for, their house names, such as Avula, Peetia, Mekala, Narra, etc., correspond with those of the working Woddars.

Some of these hard-working Woddars too do commit burglaries and dacoities when opportunities present themselves. Some of them in Nellore, Kistna and the Ceded Districts have a bad reputation and a few of them have turned reckless leaders of dacoits in Southern India.

One Venkatigadu, for whose arrest a reward of a thousand rupees was offered by the Madras Government in 1903, committed numberless dacoities, sometimes attended with murder, all over the Northern Circars, the Ceded Districts and the Nizam's Dominions. He was so familiar with all the criminal gangs all over, and was so well known to them all, that he could readily organize a fresh gang of dacoits wherever he would go. His associates need not always be of his own class. Even Koravars and other classes he would collect at an hour's notice. So much for the parent stock of Woddars.

Woddars and Donga Dasaries.

3. To return to our criminal Woddars proper, the first two names in the foregoing list are applied mainly to the Woddars resident in Cumbum taluk of the Kurnool District with their headquarters at Motupalle and Lanjakota; to the gangs of Venkatapuram in Narasipatam

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taluk of the Vizagapatam District; to the gangs living at Arecallu, Nagalapuram and other villages in Adoni taluk of the Bellary District; and to the gangs settled for a long time near Raichur. All these gangs are matrimonially connected with each other, and again are all related to No. 14, the Guntichore gangs of Dharwar, Belgaum and Bijapur Districts of the Bombay Presidency.

Guntichores of Bombay.

4. In Dharwar, these Guntichore gangs seem to have been settled in some villages of the taluks of Dharwar, Nowlgond, Herekeru, Hangal and Bankapur. In Belgaum, they are found in the taluks of Gokak, Chikodi, and Kekeri, and in Bijapur they are found in Badami taluk. They all talk Telugu like their brethren in the Madras Presidency. These gangs often arrange to meet and periodically visit the Mysore Provinces, especially Tumkur District, passing through Anantapur and Bellary; and the Nizam's territory, passing through Kistna and Kurnool Districts. The men and women disguise themselves as Dasaries with perpendicular Vaishnava marks on their foreheads, and, carrying a lamp post (garuda-cumbum), a gong of bellmetal, a small drum called Jagata and a tuft of peacock feathers, go a begging in the villages, and are at times treated with sumptuous meals including cakes offered to them as the desciples of Venkatesvarlu.

Kathiras of Nellore.

5. No. 3, Kathiras or Kathiravallu, a speical class of them, are mostly found in the Nellore District wherein, according to Police registers, they abound to the extent of over 200 men besides women and children. They are like their brethren of the Ceded Districts the worst type of criminals. They move in gangs with cattle, donkeys and pigs, all which being [illegible]ed only to serve as a blind, and are the worst burglars and dacoits moving all over the Madras Presidency under some false name and pretext. They contracted friendly relations with some of the Kapu Reddies of

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...ore and their females by selling away the stolen ...operty to them cheap, and usually find shelter in their houses. In a few villages, these Kathiras have even commenced a carnal intimacy with the Kapu women by lavishing their ill-gotten wealth on them. It has lately been found out by Mr. Narayanasawmy Naidu, a lecturer in the Vellore Police School, that these Kathiras in Nellore are related to some of their class in Trichinopoly, and that they often travel thither in their disguise as Kapus.

Telaga Pamulavallu.
Peddeti Gollalu.
Pachapavallu.
Parikimuggulavallu.
Nakkalavallu.

6. Nos. 4 to 8 are found mostly in the Nizam's Dominions and in the neighbouring districts of Kistna and Godaveri. Some of them are snake-charmers ostensibly; some, the exorcisers of devils by means of rice flour of different colors spread on the ground in the form of what is called "Muggu"; and some others spin mats and baskets for sale. They all commit crime wherever convenient, and have no fixed place of residence, travelling all over the Northern Circars besides the Nizam's Dominions. Nakkalavallu, No. 8, claim relationship with the Yanadies of Nellore and the Erragollas of Chicacole, but having been accustomed to eat jackals in jungles as the term denotes (Nakka meaning jackal) they are not now admitted into their fraternity by the Yanadies of the Southern Districts. Their ostensible means of livelihood is by sale of hares, deer and other eatable animals which they hunt in the woods.

Erragollas.

7. Erragollas, No. 9 in the list, are like their brethren at Kistna and Godavari snake-charmers ostensibly, but are dangerous criminals. They live permanently in villages adjoining Calingapatam Police Sta... their women tattoo for grain and for money like ...vars or Erukulas, and wear cloths like Kapus. Their men wear sacred thread like Brahmins when they carry snakes in baskets for show.

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They go in gangs with their women and put up two or three months in certain villages, and create trust by offering liberal interest for a few rupees taken on loan pledging jewels of trifling value. They also liberally present the rich Kapu women of the village with the meat of their stolen sheep and with vegetables, and in this way gaining the villagers' implicit confidence, they increase the money loans taken from the rich ryots, cheating them with pledging brass jewels palmed off for the moment as gold ones, and disappear all of a sudden from the village. These men also call themselves Aravapallelu, who are chiefly found in Chicacole taluk though they move all over the Northern Circars.

Dumpa Chenchus.

8. Dumpa Chenchus of Ganjam and Vizagapatam. No. 10 in the list, live mostly in Palakonda, and in the limits of Chicacole, Parlakimidi and Tekkali divisions. They live in the villages adjoining hills; when they see any officer, they at once take to the hills. They wear langoties. They are said to have descended from the Yanadies* of Nellore,

* Mr. F. S. Mullaly of the Madras Police has given a special study to this class of Yanadies (*vide* pages 21 to 27 of his notes on Criminal classes). Mr. T. Ranga Rao, a Tahsildar in Nellore, has also published a detailed and valuable history of "the Yanadies of Southern India" in a small pamphlet. They seem to think that these Yanadies are connected with Nakkalavalli and Chenchus of the Northern Circars. According to them, "there are the Reddi, the Challa or Chatla, the Adivi, the Nakkala, the Kappala or the frog-eaters, and the non-frog-eaters. The Reddi Yanadies are a settled race employed chiefly as cooks by the Panta (cultivating) Reddies. They do not mingle with the Challaand the Adivi Yanadies whom they look upon as outcastes. These Reddi and Challa Yanadies are employed as kavalgars or village watchmen in the Kistna and the Godavery Districts. The Adivi Yanadies as the name indicates, are jungle wallahs, the true nomads, the houseless wanderers, who are professional burglars out of the Nellore District. The Nakkala Yanadies in the South of the Ganjam District, and in the upland taluks of the Godavary and Vizagapatam Districts are scattered gangs deriving their name from their habit of snaring and eating jackals. They call themselves "Toorpu" or East Yanadies, but are not acknowledged by their Southern brethren. The "manchi" or good Yanadies are a small and superior class, who came down from the mountains and amalgamated themselves with the common Yanadies. Between these and the Chenchu Yanadies, there is some connection. The Yanadies of the North Arcot District, who worship the deity of Chenchu, are known as the Chenchu Yanadies."

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but they have no connection whatever with them. Their manners and customs do not differ much from those of the Chenchus of Kurnool who live mostly on forest produce and reside in hills. As I do not find this tribe in the Ganjam Manual of Mr. T. J. Maltby edited by Mr. G. D. Leman, I am lead to believe that they must have migrated into this district from the Southern Districts only quite recently. They ostensibly live by weaving date mats and catching wild animals. They commit thefts and highway robberies but never approach a railway station. This tribe is very timid. When once they are caught, they deliver the stolen property and make a free confession to avoid being tortured.

Goodoo Dasaries. Thetakars.

9. Nos. 11 and 12, Goodoo Dasaries and Thetakars, are found in North and South Arcot, Nellore and Cuddapah Districts. These men carry *Kasi Kavadies* when they go to beg, passing for religious travellers carrying Ganges holy water in their *Kavadies*, where they keep an empty rose-water bottle covered with saffron cloth and beads of Tulsi and Ruthrachi for sale, and give out that they brought them from Benares or Gya. Their women steal fowls by stupefying them with a kind of poisoned rice scattered before and eaten by them. The women sell needles and beads of all kinds hung in strings from short sticks which they carry in their hands.

Jathipallis.

10. No. 13, Jathipallis, abound in the Tanjore, Trichinopoly and South Arcot Districts. They are found also in Tinnevelly and Travancore. They say they are superior to the ordinary Koravars, but in fact do not appear so both in their conduct and crime. They roll themselves down the streets begging in the name of Venkataramana, with women following. The women also tattoo for money, grain and cloths. They are dexterous burglars and daring dacoits moving all over Southern India in gangs.

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11. These fourteen classes are thus observed to be connected with one another. Though some of them were perhaps distinct originally, in the course of their common predatory excursions carried far and wide, they began to appreciate the artful manœvures of their fraternity, and, as time wore on, commenced intermarrying with them. Thus there came about a matrimonial connection between the several gangs of the various provinces, cementing the link that already existed in the oneness of their criminal pursuits, rowing as they were in the same boat on the ocean of life.

Their women and their search.

12. All these classes take their women along in their excursions but see that they do not own them. Sometimes the elderly women take the lead and supply funds to the gang. So it is the women that have to be searched first, and they must be searched thoroughly; for, they carry stolen property secreted about their person just near their privates. In a certain case a gold waist cord was found secured about the thigh of a woman, evidently with the intention of shunning a successful search. These women are so troublesome that no ordinary timid woman will dare search their persons properly; some bold, forward and intrepid woman of another caste must therefore be specially selected for the purpose.

When Police officers go to search their houses, the females and children set up a howl along with the males, especially when the stolen property is still in their possession, which is, however, seldom the case. And sometimes they will not even shrink from assaulting the officers to escape from their clutches.

Receivers.

13. They often take their receivers with them to melt the stolen property at the spot and to purchase the gold. They keep the receivers in jungles along with the women, without recognizing them as being of their party. In places more

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familiar to them, they have local receivers especially in the persons of the arrack and toddy vendors, with whose women they have often carnal intimacy.

Recruitment and marriages.

14. These classes admit women and boys of all castes except Mussalmen and Pariahs, into their community. Their marriages are not considered sacred. In some of these classes there are no marriage ceremonies at all, though in regular Woddars a Brahmin's presence is necessary to place the pair in bonds of holy wedlock. The mere congregation of men and women around the bride and bridegroom, and a formal worship by the pair of a deity set up for the occasion, before they all treat themselves to a hearty meal and drink, constitute the marriage ceremony. The widows and divorced women can remarry in the same or neighbouring gang without any compunction.

Absence of men from camp significant.

15. Generally men do not reside with women in camps during daytime. The men and women meet during nights in the jungles. The men cannot all be got at by the Police or village heads. When the women are asked as to the whereabouts of their husbands, they will unhesitatingly say that they had deserted them some years back, even though they are pregnant or carry at the time children suckling at their breasts. Very often the village officials connive at their crime more through fear than through any monetary consideration. It is well-nigh an impossibility to recover stolen property from the men. It is only by watching carefully their habitual receivers that we can recover any property. The receivers and the women travel by trains soon after a crime, but alight at two or three stations in advance of theirs and travel by foot to their camp with the property.

Their women, and boys and girls of over 7 or 8 years, are experts in stealing articles at the waiting rooms and

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booking offices, and in handing them over to their men to be carried away. When by chance they are caught redhanded, they will never confess nor will they point out their older confederates.

They visit fairs and festivals periodically, and will not find it difficult to dislodge the jewels from the necks of children and females. These classes have all been committing burglaries and robberies both on highways and in houses at small villages, often attended with hurts and murders. Some of these gangs join the Koravars in such heinous crimes. The burglaries committed by the expert Woddars can be distinguished from others, inasmuch as the holes made by them will always be neat and four-sided.

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## CHAPTER VII.

# RAILWAY PICK-POCKETS OF INDIA.

As has already been stated in the preamble, this class consists of all castes and creeds, from Brahmins down to Chucklers. They can be found now in almost all the towns of India. These men wear a decent sort of dress, and put on all kinds of marks on their foreheads as occasion requires. They commit thefts mostly at nights, during festivals and in the trains, and at times conjointly with the Inu Koravars. They carry on their operations in much the same way as the Bhamptas and the Koravars do. One peculiarity with some of them is, that, when they are caught red-handed with the property about their person, they fling it away over the crowd or amidst persons standing close by.

Their abodes.

Some of these pick-pockets, like their Bhampta and Korava brethren, have got peculiar terms and words to converse with, intelligible only to themselves; such, for instance, as 'Palupu' meaning gold, 'Velupu' meaning silver, and so on.

2. Their women are not trained in thieving. Very rarely you find a woman figuring as a pick-pocket. The men are very clever in extracting the contents of the pockets of persons in bazaars and during festivals, and it is from this circumstance that they derive their name.

Their women.

At ticket-offices and on platforms they manage more dexterously with their victims than the other classes of thieves, while they are engaged in purchasing tickets or in getting into compartments. Most of these wear shoes called 'Chadávs', and if the articles stolen

How to search effectively.

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are very small, they put them at once into their shoes, which form very convenient receptacles from their peculiar shape. And therefore, when a pick-pocket with such a shoe on is suspected of having stolen a jewel, the shoes must be searched first, then the mouth and the other parts of the body, before searching their bundles or their houses.

Mode of thieving.

3. In large towns and on platforms they offer knives and scissors of very ordinary make for sale, and when they find it opportune, these very instruments are made use of to cut open the knots, pockets and bundles. They also carry sometimes a bundle of new towels, handkerchiefs and other cloths, which they offer to the passengers for sale. They never give out their true names when caught by the Police, who often remain ignorant of their previous convictions; and hence it is that we find many in this class with more than half-a-dozen convictions, and yet sentenced to only a few months' imprisonment for their last theft. If, however, the previous convictions had been known and taken to the notice of the Courts in due time, these light-fingered gentry would not have existed in India, but should have been transported for life. Surely there would then have been a good clearance of bad rubbish. The introduction of Anthropometry is proving effectual in this respect.

Previous convictions.

Prompt communication to the Anthropometrical bureaus desirable.

4. It is therefore necessary that arrests should be promptly communicated to all the Anthropometrical bureaus in the several provinces.

In one case in May 1894, a noted railway thief, Deen Mahomed *alias* Sheik Abdullah by name of Ajmere, living in the D. Division of the Madras City, was arrested at Guntakul Junction with all the stolen property, soon after the commission of a theft of Rs. 323, which he abstracted from the bag of a passenger while he was getting into the train. I charged him and placed him before a First Class

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Magistrate for trial, being of opinion that a sentence of six months' imprisonment which could be inflicted by a Sub-Magistrate was inadequate for a railway thief. From the respectable appearance he wore, little did I suspect that he was an old offender; but what was my surprise when, about a month after the Deputy Magistrate of Gooty sentenced him to eighteen months' rigorous imprisonment, the Commissioner of Police, Madras, informed me that the very man had three previous convictions in Chingleput, Trichinopoly and Vellore.

Thefts in 2nd and 1st class carriages.

5. Most of these are old convicts and are of different professions ostensibly. They are therefore more adventurous than the other professionals. They travel often in second and intermediate classes of trains, and walk away with the boxes and bundles of co-passengers at stations where the owners are found fast asleep. Some of them are so reckless that though they travel in third class compartments, they walk along the foot board, to the second and first classes while the train is in full motion, and remove through the windows small hand bags hung from the hat-pegs, or enter the carriages and carry away the boxes.

A Missionary robbed.

6. In a recent case in the Madras Presidency, a Missionary's bag was stealthily removed from the second class carriage in which the Missionary was travelling, to an empty first class carriage next to it; and after the contents were rummaged and the valuables stolen, the bag was left there with the useless papers in it. The Missionary discovered the loss rather too late. Nevertheless the Railway Police recovered the whole property and got the accused convicted.

Thefts in running trains.

7. In another case lately, a lady passenger in a second class was robbed when the train was running; and when she attempted to catch the thief, she was thrown out

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of the carriage through the window. The villain was afterwards traced and convicted.

8. Last year, on North-Western Railway in Sind, a lady travelling in the first class was similarly molested while the train was in full speed, and was thrown out of the window. A reward of a thousand rupees was offered for the apprehension of the culprit but in vain. In both these cases the ladies were fortunately picked up alive in the mornings with slight injuries to their person.

A Police Officer robbed.

9. In a third case, on Oudh and Rohilcund Railway, the property belonging to a Police Officer to the extent of over ten thousands, was stolen from a reserved first class carriage, where the officer and his lady had been sleeping. But in this case I hear that the carriage was standing in the yard of a station at the time.

Their organization.

10. Very lately a regular organization among some of these notorious railway thieves of different provinces was brought to light. It has thus been found that there is combination among those in Madras, Bombay, Bengal, Central Provinces, United Provinces and Punjab; the select places of rendezvous being at Indore, Secunderabad and other important towns, where they are not watched and where they seem to enjoy themselves in gaming houses after their successful excursions.

Two valuable Confessions.

11. Last year two valuable confessions were recorded, one by a Police Officer at Calcutta and another by the Superintendent of Government Railway Police, Allahabad. As both of them reveal the organized bands of these railway pick-pockets of different castes and creeds, the one common tie of thieving linking them all, I have thought it useful to the Police all over the continent of India to publish extracts from them. The lists of the railway

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thieves and of their receivers given in both these confessions seem to be nearly correct—though the places mentioned against them as their residences, have been changed by the members. For instance, No. 14 Din Mahomed *alias* Deena of Ajmere referred to in para. 4 had been living at Madras for a number of years and is now reported to have gone to England, probably to try the Scotland Yard detectives.

Confession One.

The following is the confession of Sheonath *alias* Shiba *alias* Shibnath of Cawnpore, a notorious railway thief who was arrested at Calcutta on the 26th of June, 1903:—

"My father is dead. He was a Johori at Cawnpore, Mohulla Chitai Mahal. I am 25 years of age. About eight or ten years ago a celebrated railway thief of Lucknow named Ramchendar Benia, since dead, took me in hand and taught me to be a railway thief. I used to travel all over the Indian Railways with Ramchendar for three or four years till his death—to Bombay, Calcutta and Madras, etc. Our chief receiver was Bhoiro Lal, Marwari of Bombay. Then I took up with two or three railway thieves, going journeys, first with one, then with another, namely Jivan Ram Khetri of Amritsar, many times convicted. Jivan Ram is still alive at Amritsar. Then with Hira Lal, Banya of Amritsar, a convicted railway thief. Then with Debi Dyal, Khetri, convicted railway thief, Lahore. Besides the above mentioned thieves, I know the following professional railway thieves in India":

1. Mula, Khetri of Amritsar.
2. Nuri, Khetri of Amritsar.
3. Har Kissen, Bania of Aligarh.
4. Harnath, Bania of Agra.
5. Ganga Dyal, Mahratta of Guzerat.
6. Ramchendar, Khetri of Multan.

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7. Asaram, Bania of Multan, at present at Hyderabad (Deccan).
8. Sankar Singh, Chatri of Indore.
9. Gopal Singh, Khetri of Amritsar, at present at Indore.
10. Dyaram, Khetri of Amritsar, mostly lives at Indore.
11. Chand, Mussalman of Indore.
12. Munu Lall, Kalwar of Unao, Oudh.
13. Rahim Baksh of Indore.
14. Din Mahomed *alias* Deena of Ajmere.
15. Johori, Bania of Ajmere.
16. Elahi, Mussalman of Ajmere.
17. Ramachandar, Khetri of Amritsar.
18. Gocul, Khetri, brother of 17.
19. Lalu, Bania of Ajmere.
20. Pala *alias* Bishen Dyal of Amritsar; lives at Surat where he was married about 5 years ago.
21. Das, Punjabi of Amritsar.
22. Jhumon, Mussalman of Ajmere.
23. Shiba, correct name Sheo Dyal, Khetri of Amritsar; has a brother-in-law named Saru, a shop-keeper in Calcutta.
24. Gourdhanji, Bania of Ajmere.
25. Shaik Nur of Delhi, at present in Calcutta.
26. Ibrahim *alias* Booji of Delhi, at present in Calcutta.
27. Chuni, Khetri, became a Mussalman under the name of Khoda Baksh in Ajmere jail, but again reverted to Hinduism. He is a native of Delhi but is at present in Calcutta.
28. Naurathandas, Bania of Jullundar.
29. Bulakidas is a receiver from railway thieves at Lahore.
30. Latchman Sett, Bhattia of Ahmedabad, is also a notorious receiver from railway thieves.



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"The above thieves generally travel with packages of cloth, and even in towns either purchase or get the loan of a bundle of cloth to show that they are cloth-dealers. They open boxes by means of keys, and they must be particularly careful that the box is again locked. They seldom lift boxes. They are all known to one another, but cannot be called a gang. They travel singly or two at a time—seldom more. The above-mentioned thieves are well-known to other railway thieves, and all are said to have been convicted for thefts on the different railways in India. Their exact address can easily be ascertained by questioning other known railway thieves residing in the same towns."

Confession Two.

The second confession was recorded by the Superintendent of Government Railway Police, Northern Section, from a railway thief named Mathra Prasad *alias* Jamna Prasad, son of Sadaram, Brahmin of Shekupur, Police Circle Basant, Delhi district.

"My real name is Mathra, son of Nandram. I am by caste a Brahmin and a resident of Delhi City. My parents died when I was young and since then I have lived by picking pockets and committing thefts on the railway. I have no permanent residence and am travelling about by rail. The gang I belong to, commit thefts on the railway between Meerut, Delhi, Umballa, Lahore, Ajmere and Indore."

"I was once sentenced to one year's rigorous imprisonment from the Delhi City. Again I was sent up under section 109 C. C. P. from Ghaziabad, district Meerut, and was sentenced to 6 months' rigorous imprisonment. While in Meerut jail I once received 20 stripes."

"From Ghaziabad, Arjun Khetri *alias* Gulam Rasul, a time-expired convict, resident of Amritsar, caste Bhisti of Patiala, and Sugan Chand, Saragogi, of Ajmere were *chalaned* with me."

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He then gives details of his crime on railways and says that the following railway thieves belong to his gang :

1. Ahmad, Mahomedan of Berially, lives at Shahadana, district Meerut, in the house of Behari, licensed liquor vendor and receiver of stolen property.
2. Alafkhan of Muzaffarnagar.
3. Alladia of Jansath, district Muzaffarnagar.
4. Niza Ahmad of Berially.
5. Yakub of Ballamgarh, district Delhi.
6. Niaz Ahmad of Meerut.
7. Mahomed Umar of Delhi City, convicted several times, now living at Umballa Cantonment.
8. Latchman Lodha of Pebwaria.
9. Sarjum of Batewara, who has nominally opened a shop to sell *Puris* at Delhi.
10. Ram Prasad of Delhi.
11. Piare, Bania of Delhi, who was convicted in Agra.

Then he goes on narrating several instances of thefts committed by the members of the gang at Howrah, Muradabad and other places, and also informing about the receivers and harbourers at Secunderabad and Indore, where they all seem to have a gaming house and assemble.

To these two lists, I may add the following notorious railway thieves moving all over India and even Ceylon :

1. Madar Bhaksh of Trichinopoly living at Colombo for some time.
2. Nathar Bhaksh, father-in-law of the above, now living in Hyderabad.
3. Fathejung of Delhi with one false eye, convicted several times in Madras and Bombay Presidencies.
4. Anthony of Madras now in Secunderabad jail.

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## CHAPTER VIII.

# RAILWAY SERVANTS THIEVING.

"There are more things in Heaven and Earth Horatio,
"Than are dreamt of in your philosophy."

Thieves among Railway Servants.

WHY harp so unrelentingly upon those outside thieves, as if they are the only beings of the kind? Are there not many such 'worthies' among the Railway Servants, innocent and ingenuous as they seem? Why, my reader, you will, perhaps, be surprised to learn that over 50 per cent. of the thefts committed on the railways are by Railway Servants themselves.

It ought to be at once interesting and instructive to the public, to know how each class of servants find innumerable opportunities, which, in the very nature of things, must necessarily be favourable to commit clandestine abstractions from the articles that come into their possession and custody, almost every day and every hour during their transit.

Treacherous to the trust reposed.

2. There are more consummate rogues among them than the professionals I have been treating of in the preceding pages. I could not help using such strong language in their case, in view of the fact that with little or no scruples of conscience they prove treacherous to the trust reposed in them by their officers and the public, notwithstanding the decent salaries paid to them expressly for looking to the safety of the public and their property, which thus becomes a duty morally and legally imposed on them. But with the professionals it is different; with no fixed incomes to subsist upon and being more or less actuated by 'chill penury,' they don't feel any such duty

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imposed on them, unless it be a moral obligation that they owe to the generality of mankind, as between stranger and a stranger.

3. I will now narrate a few of the ways in which each class of servants render themselves odious in this manner, by laying violent hands on public property entrusted to their care. Of course I am not to be understood to mean that every one of them is a thief. There are a good many honourable exceptions among them.

Guards: their *modus operandi*.

The public are aware how a passenger's luggage is booked at a railway station. In some cases boxes or bags which are not properly secured are placed in the luggage vans, with no better safeguard than the confidence reposed in the guard alike by the public and the establishment. The booking-clerk, before the departure of the train, makes them over to the guard and obtains his signature, and the guard as he takes charge of the articles examines them with a practised eye, if he is one open to temptation. He will thus be in a position to know which of them could be easily meddled with without exciting suspicion and which not, also the places to which they are destined. Though in the broad daylight, when the sun is riding high in the heavens appointed there as it were by the Almighty God to watch the interests of mankind down below, such worthies have not got nerve enough to carry out their criminal projects; yet as soon as

> "The sun's rim dips, the stars rush out,
> "At one stride comes the dark,"

throwing a sable mantle over all humanity, the guard, ha! ha! guard forsooth! what a misnomer! and yet a guard for all that, gets suddenly transformed into a sneaking thief, and, entering the van, rummages all the articles he had already fixed his eyes on, examining minutely the contents of the box or bundle as the case may be, and then selecting the best and most valuable of them, quietly

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transfers them to his own box in the van. On reaching the last station of his range, he makes over charge of the luggage to the next guard who relieves him. Naturally, the guards trusting each other, never examine the articles closely, but simply count them as they lie piled one upon the other in the van, and sign in the 'summary' of the relieved. In this way the article tampered with changes the possession of several guards before it reaches its destination.

4. Ultimately when the owner takes delivery of the article, he finds to his dismay several valuable contents missing and complains of the loss to the Station Master, who, in his turn, refers the matter to the Police. In the meanwhile, the first guard returns home with the booty by the next train, perhaps long before the complaint is made. It is not always that the first guard commits the extraction; any relieving guard in the course of the journey might do it. The Police of course take up the case, examine all the guards concerned, whose signatures, except perhaps that of the last on the line, are clearly shown in the 'summaries.' It is not generally possible to fix upon the culprit, when there are so many guards and their assistants involved at every stage; and to be able to trace out the property in such cases is often very difficult, if not altogether impossible; and the great many failures to bring such offenders to book was long a stigma on the reputation of the Police.

Successful complaints.

If, however, the passenger takes a little care, which perhaps is not always possible, to examine his articles at every junction or other large station, wherever the articles are exposed either in transhipping or in loading and unloading other articles, the extraction can be found out and a complaint lodged on the spot. Such a complaint, fixing as it does the limited range wherein the act was committed, will point to the culprit guard more definitely, rendering it comparatively easy for the Police to trace out the property

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Sometime ago the then Assistant Collector of Kistna was travelling from Madras to Masulipatam *viâ* Guntakul, booking the leather portmanteau containing his apparel as luggage for the brake-van. At Guntakul the gentleman casually observed his articles, while being transhipped from Madras Railway to Southern Mahratta Railway, and found the portmanteau bearing evident signs of having been tampered with. He then and there examined the contents and found several valuable clothes missing. A complaint was immediately made to the Police and the Station Master, who, in their turn, making a prompt search of the boxes of the guard and the underguard, who had been relieved at Gooty, found all the missing clothes in that of the latter. The man was then charged and placed before the District Magistrate, who gave him six months' imprisonment.

The 'golden gang' at Bangalore "copped."

5. In 1896 and 1897 two guards and three underguards, all Mahomedans, formed themselves into a 'Golden Gang' at Bangalore, and were freely abstracting valuable things of all kinds from boxes or bundles destined to distant places on foreign lines, escaping detection all the time. One of these extractions was of property consisting mostly of silk and lace cloths to the aggregate value of over Rs. 3,000 belonging to the Nabob of Amroa near Muradabad. In October 1896, nineteen boxes of luggage were booked by the Nabob and about ten of them meddled with. So dexterously was the business managed, that no railway servants all along the several lines ever suspected the boxes to have been tampered with; and throughout the journey the guards had clear signatures in their journals, notwithstanding they had to be transhipped into several railways. A special Railway Police Inspector of Lucknow, who was deputed to investigate the case, rightly suspected the railway servants of Guntakul-Bangalore line, and his report was sent to me for my action. Just about that time a box containing silk cloths and a few silver articles

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was sent from Bangalore to Sompet *viâ* Guntakul. The 'ploy' was enacted once more, but to make up the deficiency in weight, two stones and an iron spike used evidently to force the box open were thrown into it. The consignee, who was a clever vakil, preserved the stones, the spike, and the new string used by the culprits to re-stitch the gunny over it. The spike was found to belong to the South Indian Railway and the stones to Dharmavaram Taluk. The guards, who had the charge of the box at Dharmavaram, were immediately pounced upon at Bangalore, their headquarters, and to the surprise of the public and the Railway officers, a whole cartload of stolen property, including a portion of the property in the above two cases, was found in three houses. The guards used to get into the luggage vans at night, and, as the train rolled along, open the boxes at leisure, with the aid of a lamp, and repack them after helping themselves to a portion of the contents. The travelling kalasies or porters are sometimes used by such culprits as their instruments, and are given a portion of the booty. They often arrange with any of their relations or friends to stand at a certain gate or place, and, as the train approaches it at night, the bundle of the property stolen is thrown down, when the man waiting on the spot takes it away to some village and there disposes of it or takes it to the guard by road.

A guard between Agra and Tundla.

6. In 1897 the personal luggage of rich passengers that used to be booked from Bombay to Punjab was not safe on the way. There were many valuable extractions from the luggage boxes discovered at the places of destination. Frequent complaints of these extractions attracted the attention of the Railway and Police officers, and all of them were making enquiries between Bombay and Lahore suspecting many guards in vain ; but the guard who had the charge of these articles from Agra to Tundla was not in the least suspected, because he had them only for a short distance of 14 miles, and probably also because of

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the gentlemanly appearance of this Eurasian guard and his charming wife, and of their polite and respectable deportment whenever they appeared on the platforms. On a certain occasion, however, a consignment of valuable cigars that passed through Agra Fort station was reported to have been extracted from. A few days after, when the Station Master Mr. A. E. Bower, now District Traffic Superintendent on S. I. R., and his Assistant Mr. A. G. Tydd, now a Traffic Inspector on B. B. & C. I. Railway, were airing themselves in the Agra Fort station, the guard in question offered valuable cigars to both of them. They casually questioned him as to where he had got such good ones from, when, with a little hesitation, he replied that he had got them from a friend at Calcutta and gave also the name of some friend there. This excited their suspicion, and enquiries were at once instituted against the guard and his wife. The Police also suspected the same parties and searched their house, when lace and silk cloths were found secreted in beds and pillows. Many silver and other valuable articles there were, secured in boxes, and property to the extent of several thousands had been found and the guard convicted, though the wife escaped the clutches of the Law.

Station Masters.

7. Coming now to the Station Masters, and here again there are many honourable exceptions, it has to be remarked that they have greater opportunities and greater facilities than any other class of servants to commit thefts. For, these men have access to the public property at their own stations, nay, in their very rooms, with no such fear that a guard might have, of nearing a station while engaged in his criminal doings, or of being pertinently questioned by his reliever regarding the articles meddled with. A dishonest Station Master, on the pretext of a better and safer custody of the articles, will direct his menials to stow them in his own room, where he can make extractions with no fear of intrusion. He might conveniently cut open a bundle,

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remove some of the contents and re-stitch it, after stuffing the empty space with rubbish, often with stones also, to make up the weight.

In a recent case at Cocanada, stolen property all consisting of cloths extracted from time to time from various bundles, was found in the box of the Station Master, who, however, had his deserts having been convicted in three cases of theft.

It is often said that some of this class never purchase grain and other things required for their domestic consumption. Either from the waggons that pass into their stations, or from the goods booked by them, a bag of rice or other grain is misappropriated at a time, and extractions of chillies, tamarind, jaggery and other necessaries are freely made whenever convenient. In some important stations the goods sheds are looked upon by them as their own stores! The lady of the house has only to order the porter, and immediately the thing wanted is brought from the shed. It is often comically remarked that the Station Masters have a right to pilfer so—why go to the far-off bazaar when the merchant brings their necessaries to their very door? That seems to be their convenient logic.

The Assistant Station Master will never expose his brother-official, being birds of the same feather, unless there is a hitch between them in the division of their mamools or pilferings.

The menial servants also follow suit, extracting cholam or other kinds of staple grain,

'As the old cock crows, so crows the young,'

and, being given their usual share of the mamools, they do not expose their superiors.

Their *modus operandi*.

8. As soon as a bag is misappropriated, they are careful enough not to omit to send a wire at once to the despatching station that

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waggon, No. so and so, with seals intact was unloaded, but one bag was short. A copy of this wire is sent to the District Traffic Superintendent and the Police, who, seeing no occasion to doubt its veracity; naturally conclude that the bag might have been mislaid in some other waggon or might have been left behind. Thus they make fools of their officers, and laugh in their beards. At times the officers hasten to the conclusion that the bags were not counted properly when loaded, and that the merchants had not brought the bag at all, which, of course, gives a finishing stroke to the whole affair. In some of the cases, however, officers do order the recovery of the value of the bag, but, from whom? From the innocent Station Master who despatches, for, he is simple enough to plead his absence at the time of loading.

A Station Master at Calicut on the Madras Railway was so much addicted to such misappropriations, with impunity as it seemed, that he once had the foolhardiness to misappropriate a whole waggon-load valued at upwards of Rs. 500, and to go the length of stating that no such waggon was ever received by him. Enquiries were then started, and eventually the whole value had to be made good by him. It may very naturally be asked what the Police have been doing all the time. But what could the Police or anybody do? If a well-to-do merchant colludes with a Station Master, not a mere bag or waggon-load, but a whole train-load can be made away with before any complaint shall be lodged. It is too much for an officer, however vigilant and strict he may be, to keep suspecting every merchant removing goods from the shed or a waggon.

As a useful hint for the detective staff, I might lay down, that, if a Station Master or guard is strongly suspected of a theft, the property connected with it, will, in most cases, be found in his house on careful search.

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A daring misappropriation.

9. About the middle of last year, a parcel of 3,000 rupees arrived at Tenali station in the Kistna district from Secunderabad, to the address of one Kolla Guravayya, a large dealer in rice. When the merchant appeared with the owner's portion of the receipt for the delivery of the parcel, the Station Master took the receipt from him, and slyly changing it for the guard's portion of the receipt already received by him, gave the latter to the merchant, asking him to come with it the next day for the delivery of the parcel, and telling the man the bare-faced lie that the guard's portion of the receipt had not yet come in, as the reason for the delay. The merchant who was un-english-knowing, could not smell any mischief. It so happened that this merchant received six other bundles of empty gunnies that very day. The Station Master delivered all these to him but obtained his signatures in two books, one of the signatures being against the entry of the valuable parcel in question, the merchant believing that the signatures were all for the six gunny bundles and suspecting nothing all the time. The Station Master who thus obtained the merchant's original receipt as also his signature for the undelivered parcel, believed he could easily misappropriate it. The next day, when the merchant came with his brother and some others for the delivery of the parcel, the Station Master, without any compunction whatever, told to his very face, that he had delivered the parcel to him the previous day, and also obtained the receipt from him and his signature. As for the guard's portion of the receipt in the merchant's possession, he alleged that it must have been stolen from his office by the merchant with an evil design. To say that the poor merchant was simply dumfounded at this bold assertion of the audacious Station Master, is to say the least.

Complaints however came to be lodged up in due course by both the parties, and they were taken up by the

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Railway Police and investigated. The Station Master paid his dues in Jail by one year's hard labour.

Goods, Parcel and Luggage clerks.

10. Next comes another important class, Goods, Parcel and Luggage clerks, men who are in constant touch with the property by virtue of their respective appointments on the Station staff. It may be said of them that they are the actual keepers of the stores at stations, and, as such, will always be handling the property both 'in season and out of season.'

Being thus 'the monarchs of all they survey,' and with 'none to dispute their right' for the time being, the easily susceptible of them, in implicit obedience to the tempting call, extract valuables from the bundles, always taking care to re-stuff, re-pack and re-stitch properly to elude suspicion till delivery is taken. If these clerks or Station Masters happen to be addicted to drinking, the liquor cases that pass through their stations are sure to be meddled with. These men are sometimes very clever in deceiving even large European firms, by sending orders for liquor under fictitious names, for some station beyond their own; and when, as a matter of course, the boxes pass their stations, they substitute other cases, which they carefully pack with stones and grass of the approximate weight and label them with the firms' names. These false boxes go to their destination, but the Station Masters not finding the consignees, advise the firms that no such persons are in existence, when the firms order the return of the boxes. When the boxes are received, what is their chagrin to find manuscript labels in the place of their printed ones, and what is their dismay on opening the boxes to find stones and grass instead of their whiskies and clarets! They then address the Traffic Officers, who, in their turn, address the Police, at any rate not before a month, which time is taken up in correspondence. By this time perhaps the whole liquor is consumed and digest-

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ed, and the empty bottles broken, and the boxes used for fuel at leisure, so that detection in such cases is something next to impossibility. As mentioned in the Administration Report of 1899, I successfully detected one such crime committed at Guntakul by the luggage clerks in December 1898, and gave a deathblow to similar occurrences in future.

European Firms duped.

11. It may be interesting I hope to know the steps I took to detect the case. In the year 1898 no less than half-a-dozen cases of this kind were complained of by the Bombay and the Madras firms with reference to the boxes despatched to the stations on the different lines of railway. Also the Superintendent of G. I. P. Railway sent me his Chief Constable with two such substituted boxes. But, in one and all of them, the complaint was too late, being over two months old. Nevertheless, I began from that date to observe the Station staff of Guntakul a little more closely and found the luggage clerks and some others of the station drinking freely at nights, which opened up a clue to the unravelling of what seemed hitherto mysterious to a degree. But as there was no fresh complaint, I patiently waited for a suitable opportunity. As if to subserve my attempts, Christmas came with all its flurry, when, with a strong conviction that they had shown their hand at some trick once more, I surprised them in a body and had their houses thoroughly searched. To my great pleasure, a box with six full bottles of Huntley Blend Whisky with the label of Cutler, Palmer & Company was found in the house of the Assistant Luggage Clerk, as also a few new shirts of Wrenn, Bennett & Co.

I immediately ran with them to Madras, and on showing the box to Cutler, Palmer & Co., I was told that a box of the kind was sent to the address of a Ferry Overseer of Godavery that week on an order from him, and that neither the money nor any advice was forthcoming. It was subsequently ascertained that the letter said to

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have been written by the Overseer was a forged one. In fact, there was no such officer.

As for the shirts of Wrenn, Bennett & Co., the Manager produced before me some correspondence to show that some shirts have been extracted from a parcel addressed to the P. W. Inspector, Dharwar, and an old broom substituted. Thus you see I was fortunate in having pounced upon the gang without waiting for any formal complaint from the owners concerned; for, had I waited for the usual complaints and all the paraphernalia of criminal proceedings, I should probably have lost the game, or, at all events, should not have detected so very easily and with such astounding proofs of their criminality. The six bottles would have been consumed and the shirts worn and washed long before the complaint is preferred, and the chances are one to ten that the case will ever be detected.

The 'Croton case.'

12. Here is another amusing case bringing out the dare-devil character of this class of servants into singular prominence. It is called the 'Croton case.' You know that on the East Coast Railway special prizes were offered to the Station Masters, to induce them to make their platforms lovely with fine creepers and charming flowers and croton plants. The Station Master of Nidadavole, a booking-clerk likewise, had the effrontery to send an order to the Horticultural Gardens of Bangalore, under a fictitious name, for various kinds of flower and croton plants. On the consignment arriving, he took care to inform the gardeners at Bangalore that the consignee could not be found and commenced planting the crotons on the platform. The Bangalore men, who were thus cleverly duped, saw perhaps no other alternative than to request the Station Master to oblige by putting them to auction, when of course he did it pell-mell, purchasing them for a nominal bid himself in others names. The fellow has subsequently been convicted for theft in another case, and one more riddance it was.

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Many and various are the cases of a similar nature, to cite all of which will take volumes: For, have not many of my readers missed the whole or portions of fruits and vegetables ordered from time to time from distant places?

The Yard Servants.

13. This class includes the carriage examiners, the numbertakers, the yard foremen, the pointsmen, the porters, and others who do business in the station yards. As they move about the waggons in the course of their business, they remove articles of all descriptions from the waggons without betraying any fear or compunction. The carriage examiners and the numbertaker once removed at Guntakul, with a degree of celerity that was simply astonishing, a parcel of gold and silver of over Rs. 5,000 value from the brake-van through the offside door, while the train was standing in the yard ready to go to Bangalore. The heavy parcel was at once buried, and after some days divided among the party concerned. But the culprits, one and all of them, had to pay the penalty of the law sooner or later.

It is usual with these men, to shunt on some pretext or other the waggon they set their eye upon, to some distant point of the station where they can both extract and carry away the property with greater facility. The seals affixed are no bar to them: the string bearing the seal is snapped, and knotted again to avoid immediate detection. In the case of open waggons the work is much more easy; they have simply to shove out a bag or two at some convenient place in the darkness, as the waggons are shunted in the ordinary course. Very often the extractions are committed on the platforms as the goods are loaded or unloaded.

Missing line clears.

14. On B. B. & C. I. Railway, in through goods trains, the line clears are made to miss purposely to bring the trains to a stop; and when the trains naturally stop at some distance from

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the station, the line clear is taken by a porter. In the meanwhile, the other menials or their accomplices get over the waggons and shove down a few bundles from the waggons, which they take home after the train's departure. At the destination of the waggon when the bags or bundles are missed, there is usually correspondence between the forwarding and receiving stations: but generally, the spot at which they are actually stolen is not taken into account even by the enquiring officers. A few instances of this nature have been discovered and the culprits brought to book.

Re-booking stolen articles.

15. In a recent case at Godra on B. B. & C. I. Railway, it was found that leather bundles brought to the goods shed, booked and loaded in waggons, were removed by night by the station menial staff, and, of course, in collusion with the merchants, taken by a different route in carts to the goods shed the next morning to be re-booked as a different consignment.



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CHAPTER IX.

## HINTS ON DETECTION.

DETECTION, from a Latin word signifying *to uncover*, means the uncovering or bringing to light something attempted to be kept concealed; the exposure of an act, thing or person that does exist but is unknown. It is not, therefore, impossible for a man to detect a crime committed by another in 'flesh and blood' like himself. It is only a question of time and perseverance, as you will find presently. It ill-behoves a Police Officer, therefore, to give up a case as impossible to detect, after the few immature and futile attempts that he makes to come at the truth. The difficulty, which he is only too ready to call impossibility, lies more with him than with the case. There it is, as accessible as ever, if only he works with zeal and caution, throwing his very heart and soul into the matter, with a firm resolve worthy of a detective never to desist until he succeeds in tracing out the crime, or dies in the attempt. May it be with our detectives as with the soldier in Tennyson's immortal song!

Detection, never an impossibility.

"Theirs not to make reply,
"Theirs not to reason why,
"Theirs but to do and die;"

always with a distinct aim in view in all that they set about to do in this life of theirs, which is "no empty dream," but is "real" and "earnest." No case of any importance involving life and property should ever go out of the mind of a Police Officer. It must live there ever hot with the hints and clues that he needs must learn from time to time, if only he does not, like some indolent men, conclude too soon that it is impossible for man to detect it. As an old proverb says, and very aptly too—

"Hasty conclusions are the mark of a fool."

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All that is necessary is a certain amount of perseverance, courage and determination. Know we not the grand old motto of Napoleon, 'Nothing is impossible for man.'

The first step in investigating.

2. Very often a Police Officer, when he goes to the scene of an offence, questions the complainant the first thing as to whom he suspects, without even acquainting himself with the details of the case. Think you that this type of an officer will ever achieve success, especially in cases against property? Never! An officer of tolerable tact and judgment generally begins with taking a statement from the complainant, questioning closely about the several circumstances of the case and the movement of any persons at or near the scene of action at the time. Even if the complainant should volunteer his suspicions against a man from ill-feeling or other trivial cause, he simply considers it as one of the circumstances and works up without allowing it to colour the glasses he sees through. Particular care is taken in noting down every bit of information that may have any bearing on the facts of the case, as sometimes circumstances which do not appear to be important when taken by themselves, form very important links when the clue is got and the case detected. What at first appear to be mere 'trifles light as air' become in the long run 'confirmations strong as proofs of holy writ.' And the officer, too, is dubbed perhaps with the remark, 'He that is wise in small matters cannot be foolish in large ones.'

## REQUISITE QUALIFICATIONS.

3. The following are some of the principal qualifications requisite to make a successful detective :—

Observation.

i. **Observation.**—This is the most essential of them all. A detective must have his eyes and ears always open about him. Nothing, however trivial, should escape his notice. He should take note of the minutest detail that he sees or hears.

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Mere enquiry will not do unless supplemented by his own ocular demonstration whenever that is possible. Very often carelessness in omitting to note down a blood-stain or a foot-print, spoils the whole case. The seriousness of such omissions will be apparent when you are told that sometimes heavy crimes, such as murders and dacoities, are traced solely by the aid of such marks and prints. Don't we hear it often said that a Police Officer should talk less, but see and hear more? In murder cases, the Police and the village authorities are the first to conduct the preliminary examination, and, as such, should observe the minutest details found on the corpse and at the scene of offence, and record the same in the inquest paper or mahazarnamah prepared at the time. It almost always happens that evidence will be forthcoming at the trial regarding the circumstances, the state and position of the body, and the persons who saw or heard several facts connected with the murder, though they have found no place in the inquest paper. This evidence, however, is always open to suspicion. It is, therefore, imperative that all the evidence available at the time in the village, and all the symptoms observed, be noted carefully in the paper before the body is despatched for the *post mortem* examination, no matter even if there be a little delay. A judge or a clever lawyer will concern himself more with the inquest report and the report of the village officials than with the evidence adduced.

Promptitude.

ii. **Promptitude.**—The quick appearance at the scene of offence to take immediate action, is another qualification equally important. A Police Officer must, in the very nature of things, expect every moment some report or other of a serious nature; and immediately that he receives one, he must gallop off to the spot. A minute's delay, especially in murder cases, means losing so much valuable evidence. He must 'strike the iron while it is hot,' or, sure, he will

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miss many important links in the evidence if he goes to the spot leisurely after the removal of the corpse, or after the close of the inquest. The intense ardour of the villagers, burning to hook the culprit on to the gallows, might perhaps cool down as time advances, making them less communicative; or, if the culprit happens to be an influential man, much evidence might be lost for ever. 'Never put off till to-morrow what you can do to-day.'

Patience.

iii. **Patience** ranks next in importance. As soon as an informant—and there are many classes of informants as described in the sequel—gives out any particulars regarding a case, the Police Officer must make it a point to *listen carefully*, taking in all the details, even to minutiæ, *consider deeply*, weighing every bit of information and taking it for what it is worth, and *judge calmly* without being carried away by any one particular more than the other. And then he must allow himself to be guided by it, if it has successfully stood the test and is reliable. But he ought not to be hasty in forming conclusions, taking this or that as reliable, or throwing it away as unreliable, without bestowing due consideration upon it. Patience seems bitter at first, yet the fruit is sweet. Again, a Police Officer ought to dive deep into all the details of the facts before him. He ought not to be content and stop with the evidence before him, when there is a likelihood of getting more; and it is the duty of the Police to adduce evidence even regarding the facts which, they are sure, will be admitted by the accused, just to make the prosecution strong enough.

"Make assurance double sure."

In all these and in what follows, a degree of patience is requisite that is seldom exercised by the Police to their great disadvantage. Thus it is how their failures and miscarriages are sometimes signal and most humiliating. In heavy crimes, an officer will have to move about for days together, before he gets at a piece of information

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which serves him as a clue, or as a hint from which some clue is derived. There is no use in depending upon the constables for information, for their interest towards public property and safety is clearly at a discount.

Affability and condescension.

iv. **Affability.**—Affable and courteous treatment of the public is another secret of success. A Police Officer must be accessible to all persons, of whatever circumstances they may be in life. He must condescend a little to go to every nook and corner of the village he visits on business, and to converse freely with the villagers as if he is one of them, if at all he cares to collect reliable information. The people look upon a Police Officer generally with dread, but that feeling must be converted into one of love for him by his affability, and then success to be sure will attend his mission. He must not only be firm and determined in his purpose, but also affable, gentle and courteous in his treatment of all persons alike.

"Suaviter in modo, fortiter in re."

## INFORMANTS.

4. There are several classes of these, as I have already said. Some of them chiefly are:—

Honourable informants.

i. **The honourable informants.** These are respectable persons in society, who have such a deep sense of law and justice that they never rest till they expose the culprit and see him punished. They are actuated by no spiteful motive, but simply work for the good of humanity in the ennobling cause of the amelioration of the masses. A Police Officer can easily find them out from the way in which they lodge their information, and from a few searching questions put to them. This class relate the actual facts; they

"Nothing extenuate,
"Nor set down aught in malice."

It is even so with the next class of informants,

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ii. **The innocent or artless informants,** who are simple enough to be dragged into narrating a truthful tale of facts seen or heard by them, alike ignorant of the consequences of the information they give out and of the cravings of law and justice; nor are they influenced by any spite or other motive. A Police Officer, passing through the fields and petty villages on the look out for any important information, if only he cares to accost some shepherd boy or peasant whom he comes across, with kind words about his sheep, or concerning his welfare, can be sure of leading him on to the point uppermost in his mind. Such informants abound mostly in the rude uncivilized country parts, but not in towns, where roguery keeps steady pace with civilization.

Innocent informants.

But these villagers cannot as a rule stand the test of long cross-examination by the wily Vakils, who generally put equivocal questions to exact the answer yes or no, and thus gain the purpose of breaking down their evidence. Very often such answers of yes or no are given readily, without their understanding the gist of the question, just to be done with the business and get away as soon as they can, from the precincts of these solemn and awe inspiring courts which they perhaps see for the first time in their lives.

iii. **The timid informants.** These men give information generally on being questioned by an officer, but request always not to be exposed for fear of the culprit. They are also afraid of being 'dragged' into court. These informants are equally useful for purposes of law; but the information has to be worked up, and fresh materials discovered on its strength. It is not always safe to cite them as witnesses, for, when in courts, they may deny everything. The merchant community and the shepherds in the mofussil mostly belong to this class.

Timid informants.

In my capacity of assistant to an officer on special duty in the Central Criminal Intelligence Department, I got

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reliable information from a Banya broker at Ahmedabad, that a shroff there had long been uttering counterfeit coins. He even gave an instance of his having done so quite recently. On this information, I arranged a search with the help of the Local Police under Mr. R. M. Phillips the District Superintendent of Police, and found some false coins in the shroff's possession. But this informant did not speak to the fact in the court when cited as a witness, the merchants by whose help he had been living having threatened to cease their connection with him.

Spiteful informants.

iv. **The spiteful informants,** who freely give information in a vindictive spirit through spite. The information is nevertheless true, but the motive is low. It is none the less important for that, so far as the investigation of a case is concerned. Men of this class are often inclined to add or suppress facts as they like, but a detective of ordinary common sense can separate the chaff from the grain.

Accomplice informants.

v. **The accomplice informants,** who play the informant when they fall out with their comrades for some reason or other. These will try to exonerate themselves, and, in the effort, twist and distort the real facts so as to throw suspicion off themselves. Nevertheless, the information is useful; only, it has all to be taken *cum grano salis*.

Not infrequently these informants arrange the commission of a crime with the accused, and apprise the Police of it, of course, with a promise from the latter that they will not be charged. Whenever some Police officers fail to bring the offenders to book in other decent ways, they have recourse to these unscrupulous men, paying them to boot for the nasty part they play. This looks more like an abetment of the offence than "provoking the agents o crime" as it is termed. This sort of detection betrays the want of detective talent in the Police.

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vi. **The associate informants,** who have no hand in the commission of the crime, but still are given a share in the booty in consideration of their associating with them in milder vices. If at any time they are overlooked, they "squeak," and, as in the preceding case, they never 'a round unvarnished tale deliver' lest they should get mixed up in the affair. Even this piece of information cannot fail to be useful, if the officer proceeds with caution.

Associate informants.

vii. **The false informants.** These are the worst and most detestable type of men we ever come across. They are so dead to all scruples of conscience, and to the calls of humanity, that they do not shrink from making deliberately false statements with scarcely a modicum of truth, knowing them to be false. They do it so boldly and so unflinchingly, and yet with such apparent sincerity, that Police Officers are often beguiled into ruining many an innocent person implicated by them, while the real culprits trot off scotfree; thus they defeat the ends of justice. Officers cannot, therefore, be too guarded against this kind of informants, who in sooth are greater delinquents than the offenders themselves.

False informants.

viii. **The paid informants.** Others there are who fish out information for the sake of 'fees,' as I may say, paid to them by the complainants sometimes or by the detectives.

Paid informants.

Old pensioned Police Officers and *others* who find time hanging heavy on their hands, and also law touts perhaps, are thus engaged; sometimes as special informants by the Police to collect materials in disguise. But all these require to be borne out by some stern facts.

A few others are taken regularly in service, permanently or temporarily, to act the informant. In many provinces, even members of criminal tribes are enlisted as Police

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constables; but these are found to be of very little use not doing their duty properly, and sometimes even suspected of shirking it in the interest of the offenders.

Associates of the accused.

5. A Police Officer must next concern himself with finding out the associates of the accused in a crime, for it is through them that they manage to dispose of the stolen property. There is a greater risk, and therefore a greater chance for detection, in the disposing of the property, than in the commission of the crime itself. The associate is in the position of a 'tout' to the thieving fraternity. It is he that finds customers for the stolen goods. Sometimes a man well connected and well educated performs this part, disposing of any amount of property, while all the time he baffles suspicion by his respectable appearance. Once in a case of dacoity in the Ceded Districts, a Pleader happened to sell the stolen property, though guilty knowledge could not be brought home to him by the Police.

Burglaries and dacoities.

6. BURGLARIES AND DACOITIES.—These are the most difficult offences for a Police Officer to detect. They are generally committed not by amateur thieves, but by professionals of some standing. Bad and depraved characters, of all classes and creeds, of different villages far away from each other, conspire together beforehand, their usual haunts for such conspiracies being gaming houses, cock-fightings and toddy-shops.

As a rule, the burglars and dacoits do not confine their operations to any fixed locality. They often go beyond their own districts, having their own spies to ascertain for them where any rich house can be successfully broken into. After fixing their game, they frequent the spot and make a close and careful study of its topography, so that they may not experience any difficulty afterwards in effecting their escape with the booty. Usually, in burglaries an inhabitant

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of that or of the neighbouring village, who is well acquainted with the house or houses reported to be rich, gives the clue to the burglars in the first instance, of course on promise of a share in the booty. He even sends for them and harbours them under his roof for a day or two or more at times. In heavy burglaries committed by these vile characters, the spoil is divided before the next morning on some hill, or in some tope on their way. Though proverbially faithful to each other in the cause of the fraternity, they do not display the same confidence in the case of property. Not infrequently, the cleverest of them conceals a portion of the booty, showing only the rest to his comrades.

A skilled detective can easily distinguish the openings cut out by pucca burglars from those made by a clumsy thief, from their neat and symmetrical figure, while that made by a beginner is sure to be uneven and crooked. It is for this reason that the latter receives scratches on his back and chest, which at times afford a valuable clue for the detection of the case.

Similarly, the holes made by Cabulee burglars and some of the Northern India gangs by means of drills in the doors and windows, can readily be distinguished from those made by ordinary blacksmiths and other burglars who break open hasps, bolts and chains in a clumsy, rude sort of way.

Enquiring the accused.

7. After obtaining the clues or hints in the manner pointed out in the foregoing pages, and after getting at the accused through their aid, by his independent enquiry as recommended in para. (2) *supra*, the Police Officer comes to the very acme of a criminal enquiry, the duty of examining the accused himself. He must weave round him a close net-work of all the facts and circumstances worked up, so very formidably arrayed against him that he needs must admit his crime, if he be guilty; but,

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as a rule, we find the rogues never admit, always answering the queries of an officer with a series of negatives. But these denials, too, can be turned to account, if the officer is intelligent enough to elicit in the same manner denials of certain circumstances often favourable to the prosecution, and collect evidence also on such denials.

In a scientific work called 'The Criminal' (The Contemporary Science series) the author says, the structure of the several organs in a human being indicates his qualities. But this physiognomy requires a special study. Another author, a Bengal detective, assures us that by closely observing the movements of the ends of lips, of nose lids, and the changes in the cheeks and in the corners of the eyes, we can find out the real culprit. But this is not to be our sole guidance in the absence of other materials.

8. When the Police Officer in this way works up the case, collecting all kinds of evidence, no matter whether it is primary, secondary, circumstantial or mere hearsay, he must make it a point to *record* every circumstance, however trivial, connected with it; though, when the case is placed before a Magistrate, the hearsay and other irrelevant evidence *must* be excluded from the charge sheet. By the bye, much depends upon how a case is laid before a Magistrate and how it is conducted *in Court*. Very often good and genuine cases miscarry in courts for want of sufficient precaution in those matters. It is not unusual for the officers to supply false links in such cases, or even suppress portions of facts, as a necessary step to secure conviction—a step which is slyly encouraged by a few of the Sub-Magistrates. But that is in no way advisable. Able Judges, when they but find any portion false, are apt to suspect the genuineness of the whole case. When once an able District Magistrate questioned me as to why the Station-house Officers trouble themselves with adding false

Recording indispensable.

False links inadvisable.

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links even in true cases. I had to reply that it was owing to the encouragement they receive from the Sub-Magistrates. The following illustration explains my meaning. A burglary is committed in a house in a certain village at midnight, and some gold jewels are lost. The next morning the residents discover the loss and complain to the Police, who, in their investigation, successfully recover the property after a few days, in a village about five miles off, from the possession of a pretty respectable man. There is the evidence of the commission of the crime and of the recovery of the stolen property; more is not known, as everybody was asleep at the time. If these materials are placed before a Sub-Magistrate, he convicts the man in whose possession the jewels were found, as the possessor of stolen property; but not for burglary. The case of burglary still stands against the Police 'in proud array' in all the records as undetected, although it has been dealt with completely and truly detected. If, however, a link is supplied in the shape of a false witness, to prove that the accused was seen at or about the house or village in question, the Magistrate has easy work of it, and the Police are off with another feather perhaps to their cap. But with an intelligent and conscientious Judge it is different. It does not cost him any trouble to ascertain the nature of the evidence by a little flourish of a well-directed cross-examination; and if once he begins to suspect the sincerity of the witness, he will perhaps end with throwing out the case altogether. It is, therefore, unwise, if not exactly dangerous, to take that false step which tends merely to the improvement of evidence.

Public prejudice against the Police.

9. It is well known that the Police are already scoffed at in secret by the public at large. His Honor the Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal observed, in the course of a debate on the Age of Consent Bill, that 'there exists in the public mind a strong bias against the Police, and

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however unjustifiable and unreasonable it might be, Government should take note of it and adopt means to allay public fear.' There is thus the danger of individual Police Officers, however zealous and true their conduct might be, being sacrificed to this Moloch of popular prejudice. A Police Officer cannot, therefore, be too cautious in discharging his duties legitimately, honestly and conscientiously, always keeping in view the sin of criminating innocent persons. 'He who sins against man may *fear* discovery, but he that sins against God *is sure* of it.'

No hard-and-fast rule to guide.

10. Though, by reason of the multifarious nature of crimes, each of which is differently circumstanced from the rest both in inception and development, it is not possible to lay down any hard-and-fast rule to guide a Police Officer through all the labyrinthine stages of unravelling the tangled web of a crime, I have endeavoured to give a general outline of the hints which every Police Officer ought, or at least I never failed, to find serviceable in investigating any criminal case of any description whatsoever. And I will now wind up this brochure with a brief *resumé*, not omitting of course the most salient points, of an important case which nearly cost me my life; a case the like of which very few Police Officers have met with in their career. Being replete, as it is, with peculiar circumstances and technicalities, my brethren in office cannot fail to draw important lessons from this unique case, as to how they should regulate the time and manner of searching houses, what promptitude and energy they should display in appearing at the scene, and in conducting their investigation; and, above all, how imperative it is for them to thoroughly equip themselves with a sufficient *posse* of constables and with a full-charged revolver. For, it will be seen that it was through not taking such precautions as these, I got desperately involved 'in hair-

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breadth escapes and dangers imminent' at the hands of a host of marauders, more ruffianlike perhaps as they seemed to me than the 'Anthropophagi' immortalised by Shakespeare.

11. In the year 1890, when there was no railway communication between Guntakal and Bangalore as now, it was a well-known fact in those parts, that the road between Gooty and Anantapur was the hotbed of dacoities, and people lived in constant dread of travelling along it. The Police of Gooty and Anantapur had a very uneasy time of it. I was then the Police Inspector of Gooty.

A dacoity off Gooty.

On the 27th of July 1890, a dacoity of some importance was committed on the high road, seven miles from Gooty. I took horse to different villages to the east and north, and on the 1st August following, while I was going to Nagasamudrum, I happened to pass a Talyari on his way to Gooty, who, on being questioned, hinted that the Korichas of the gang of Kattakindapalle, a hamlet of Hanumpalle, were now and then seen returning to their village, across the tank of Nagasamudrum early in the mornings. Hanumpalle was within my limits, but the hamlet belonged to the sub-division of Uravakondah.

A clue.

Successful search.

12. Early in the morning of 2nd August 1890, I went to Kattakindapalle, taking with me the village Munsiff of Nagasamudrum and a Talyari, as the village officers of that hamlet do not live there. I was also accompanied by the Head Constable of Gooty, three Constables and a beat Constable of Uravakondah who joined us. I could not send for the Station-house Officer of that division, as I was told that he was engaged in another case. We all hurried on to the row of huts, of which there were about seven to the south of the village, and surrounded them. The Korichas inside were still asleep. I called them all out, in order to

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ascertain whether any of the members were absent; and, without allowing any of them to re-enter their huts, I commenced the search of the huts in the presence of a few leading ryots of the village. In the first hut which belonged to the head of the gang, two small pots were found buried at about a yard's depth with several gold and silver jewels in them. The people present exclaimed that the property belonged to the Mondi Thurakas who were robbed near Karoor in the Uravakondah division, about seven months before, and for which case this gang was tried but acquitted for want of evidence. Thereon the Koricha (Nagadu), in whose hut the property was discovered, made an admission to me of his guilt, adding that the Village Munsiff, Kurnam and some of the ryots present had also been given a portion of the spoil in question. Leaving then a guard on the remaining Koricha huts, I went into the village and searched the houses of the persons mentioned by the Koricha. In the house of a leading ryot, a silver bangle corresponding to the one taken from the Koricha hut was found. Search lists were then and there prepared at the hut and the houses in the village, and the search of the remaining huts resumed in the afternoon. The Forest Officer of that section happening to come there, saw the jewels which I had with me on a cot in front of the huts. In the third hut some property relating to the dacoity of my division was found.

A Kurnam and a Munsiff on the scene.

13. Just then the Village Munsiff and the Kurnam with a Talyari came from Hanumpalle and entered the village, evidently on information that they had also been implicated by the Koricha, and fifteen minutes later appeared with 15 or 20 others, all in a crowd, facing me. When I accosted the Kurnam very courteously in these words, "Kurnamgaru come and sit," he replied in an insolent and defiant manner, "Are you the Collector that I should come when you call? You come and search the

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houses of ryots and cause confusion in our absence!" I at once apprehended an assault, and called the Head Constable who was engaged in the search. The Head Constable approached the Kurnam and stretching forth his hand, said "Come, Sir, sit near the Inspector. Have you come to create a disturbance?" As soon as he stretched out his hand, the fellow drew back a little, took off his slipper and struck him with it, and both he and the Munsiff cried aloud, 'beat,' 'beat.' There was a great confusion. Stones were pelted at the Head Constable. I had to get up and had taken hardly a step towards the Head Constable who was attacked, when the Koricha (Nagadu) suddenly seized the bundle of property on the cot and was running away with it. I followed him, and held him down, struggling hard to recover the property but being beaten on the back with sticks I had to let go. About 20 men with clubs and stones surrounded me, and I sought in vain for the revolver left with my saman in the temple close by. I then emerged into an open place by the side of a cattle shed, when I was knocked down by a heavy blow. I, however, managed to get up, and running a few paces, secured the revolver.

Assault.

14. I then turned round, and, facing the crowd which was pursuing me, threatened to fire if they continued their pursuit. They did not like my revolver, but pursued me all the same. I therefore aimed at the Kurnam's legs and fired. I missed the Kurnam, but a Koricha behind him received the bullet in his foot. Immediately after this, a strong man backed by some others aimed a blow at me. I fired at him, and he turned and fell, bleeding profusely from the armpit. I then aimed at the poojari of the temple who raised a stone to throw at me, and pulled the trigger. The revolver did not go off. Thinking there were no more cartridges in it, I threw it down and began to run towards a cholum field as fast as I could. But I fell down, and four or five persons who followed me beat me again and again, until at

Use of revolver.



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last I pretended to appear like one dead. Thereupon a man threw a heavy stone at me, which smashed my left thumb, and another aimed a pointed stone at my stomach, which hit me, causing a deep cut about three inches in length. Just then there was a brisk shower of rain, and they all left me for good. It appeared to me as if the Almighty had specially sent the shower for my sake, to cool the excitement of the mob, and to allay my thirst a little.

Retinue attacked.

15. Meanwhile, the Munsiff of Nagasamudrum, who accompanied me, the Head Constable, the Constables, the Talyari, my bandyman, my horsekeeper and my cook were all given chase and beaten. The Munsiff was brought back to the chavadi; the Forest Officer, who had unfortunately returned to the village to see what the tumult was about, was also beaten and placed in the chavadi. Myself and my Head Constable were carried and laid together under the pial of the chavadi. The beaten Munsiff was forced to write a false report, on pain of being beaten again, that I illegally entered the house of the deceased and assaulted him and shot him, though the deceased had no connection whatever either with dacoities or with the receiving of stolen property.

Rescue.

16. Mr. Lucas, a military pensioner and Railway employé, was informed of the occurrence by a fugitive Constable, named Mudere, and requested to go to the spot and rescue me. He arrived at the village in the evening, riding over three miles' distance, with a lot of people on foot. On nearing the village, he saw a number of men running from the village to the jungle and rocks. He saw me along with the Head Constable placed in a covered cart, to which we had been removed at the wise suggestion of the beaten Munsiff. My "cloths were covered with blood and hair dishevelled, and the Head Constable was in a state of nudity and covered with mud." Mr. Lucas, after giving

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me some water to drink, arrested the Munsiff, the Kurnam, the Korichas, and some others mentioned by me, and took all of us to Gooty. He snatched the revolver from the Munsiff, and found in it two discharged cartridges and one loaded chamber with empty chambers on both the sides.

Magisterial enquiry.

17. The next morning, the Sub-Magistrate of Uravakonda, the Taluk Magistrate of Gooty, and the Divisional Magistrate all arrived, and took my sworn statement, as they all apprehended that I would die of my wounds. The Sub-Magistrate, the Superintendent of Police, and the local Police Inspector all repaired to Kattakindapalle and examined many people, including the deceased's wife and brother; and all of them supported my statement, though the Munsiff and the Kurnam tried to set up an *alibi*, and stated that they had come there after the tumult was over. The accused had a High Court Vakil, an Attorney and two First Grade Pleaders to defend them.

Their trial.

Mr. Holmes, the then acting Sessions Judge of Bellary, after a patient trial of five days, convicted eleven of the accused, including the Munsiff and the Kurnam, and sentenced them all to three years' imprisonment, and to execute bonds to keep the peace for two years more.

18. Then the two cases of dacoity were launched against the Korichas. The first one was with regard to the property found in the first Koricha hut in the search of the 2nd August 1890. As the property was carried away by the Koricha, secondary evidence was offered along with the original search list, which was fortunately for me, and unfortunately for them, not destroyed by the assailants. Mr. Holmes, with the aid of a jury, whose foreman was an honest man, sentenced five of the gang to long terms of imprisonment. In the second case, dacoity likewise, five of them were charged for the offence committed on Gooty-

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Anantapur road on 27th July 1890, and they were tried by the same Judge with the help of a jury having a pensioned District Munsiff as its Foreman. They were all sentenced to long terms of imprisonment.

Appeals to High Court.

19. Appeals were preferred in all the three cases. Mr. Justice Wilkinson dismissed the appeals in the two dacoity cases.

In the assault case, however, Mr. Justice Muthusawmy Iyer and the Honorable Mr. Justice Parker heard the appeal. Mr. Wedderburn appeared for the appellants. Their Lordships delivered judgment on the 23rd February 1891, reducing the sentence from three years to eighteen months' imprisonment.

Prejudice.

With all the deference due to such exalted and venerable Judges of the High Court, I endeavour to point out how the prejudice against the Police could not be kept out of their minds, even in a case of life or no life like this, where the accused happen to be two scheming village officials, a Kurnam and a Village Munsiff, who had not only made themselves liable for encouraging highway dacoities and sharing the spoil, but also rendered themselves execrable in the eye of the law as well as of the public, by trying to defeat the ends of justice even to the extent of mortally wounding the officers concerned with justice. The Medical Officer's statement reads:—"On examining the Inspector, I found upwards of forty contusions and abrasions on his person, caused probably by sticks and stones." "For some days his life was in danger." "His left thumb has been both fractured and dislocated and is permanently injured."

Comments on evidence.

20. Their Lordships, though they admit "there is no counter-evidence as to what really occurred," state further on, "it seems to us there is reason to believe that the story told by the Police witnesses cannot be entirely true."

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in spite of the fact being sufficiently borne out by the accused themselves, the Forest Officer new to the taluq, the Village Munsiff of Nagasamudram, and the enquiries of a whole body of Magistrates and a Sessions Judge. Again, their Lordships say that "the shots must have been fired upon retreating persons," giving their reasons as: "the medical evidence shows that the man who was shot dead was shot in the back, the bullet entering eight inches below the neck on the left of the spinal column, and penetrating the lung, came out about four inches below the left armpit." The Medical Officer stated as his opinion, that the man in turning aside a little to avoid the shot aimed at him, must have got it in the back; otherwise the shot would not have penetrated sidewise under the armpit. If the man was running away with his back towards me, the shot must have passed through the chest or below the chest. In a similar strain, their Lordships commented on the evidence given in a case, by persons who were surrounded and beaten by a mob of hillmen about sixty in number, headed by their leaders, the village officers, who always exercise an undue influence over them.

21. It was upon these unfavorable comments of their Lordships, that the recommendation of the District Magistrate and the Inspector-General of Police to present me with a suitable reward, was not favourably considered by the Madras Government. The Inspector-General of Police, who made local inquiries in this case, and who studied the case from its very inception, disagreed with the remarks of the High Court, and sanctioned the reward which he had in his power to present, noting down in the Police Administration Report of that year as follows:—

Inadequate reward.

"Detection in Anantapur has risen from 20 in 1889 to 28·6 in 1890 (in dacoities). In one case Inspector Paupa Rao Naidu, of Anantapur, while engaged in searching the huts of a gang of Korichas, who were suspected of having committed certain dacoities, was most brutally attacked by

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them and by some of the adjoining villagers, and the property discovered by the Inspector was forcibly taken from his hands. The Inspector then attempted to recover the same, but the crowd overpowered him. Imagining that his life was in jeopardy, he made use of his revolver, shooting one dead and wounding another, but he was afterwards severely mauled, beaten and left for dead; finally he was rescued by Mr. Lucas, a Railway Inspector. His left thumb has been permanently injured. This Inspector has also been instrumental in breaking up a bad criminal gang, and of procuring the conviction of its principal members, for which good work he was granted a reward of Rs. 50 by the Inspector-General of Police."

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THE

# CRIMINAL TRIBES OF INDIA,

**No. II.**

THE

## HISTORY OF KORAWARS, ERUKULAS OR KAIKARIES.

BY

M. PAUPA RAO NAIDU,

*of the Madras Police,*

**The Author of "The History of Railway Thieves with Hints on Detection."**

MADRAS:
HIGGINBOTHAM & CO.

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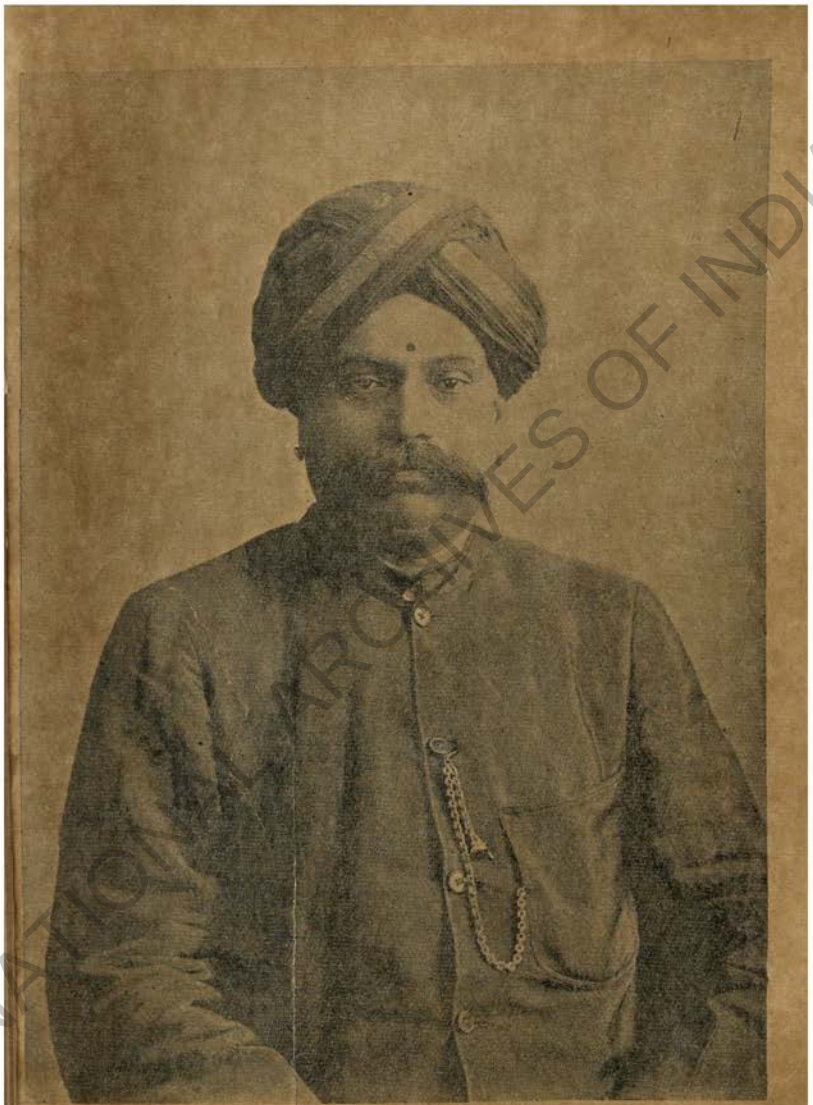

M. PAUPA RAO NAIDU.

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To

FREDERICK FAWCETT, ESQ.,

DEPUTY INSPECTOR GENERAL OF POLICE, MADRAS.

THIS BROCHURE

IS

WITH KIND PERMISSION

MOST RESPECTFULLY DEDICATED

AS A MARK OF GRATITUDE FOR HIS KINDNESS

AND APPRECIATION OF THE AUTHOR'S

SERVICES RENDERED IN THE

DEPARTMENT.

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# PRESS OPINIONS.

## The "Madras Mail."

THE CRIMINAL TRIBES OF INDIA.—Mr. M. Paupa Rao Naidu, of the Madras Police, has just issued a second Bulletin on the Criminal Tribes of India (Messrs. Higginbotham & Co.), in continuation of his first publication entitled "The History of Railway Thieves." The new book deals with the history of the Koravars, otherwise called Erukulas or Kaikaries, one of the largest, most daring and craftiest of criminal tribes in India. They are a Dravidian people; but their sphere of operations, at the present time, extends from Cape Comorin in the South to as far North as Rajputana, and they have assumed various names in the course of their progress northwards. Though the Koravars have thus spread themselves over a vast tract of country their Gotras (clans), their language and their peculiar manners and customs still remain the same. Mr. Paupa Rao Naidu remarks that the history of the ubiquitous Koravar has already been dealt with by Captain Harvey, Assistant Superintendent of the Thuggi and Dacoity Department, and other capable officers of the Police Department. In spite of this fact, however, the author of the work under review has been happily induced to give his own experiences as a Detective Officer and to enumerate some recent discoveries which he has made about the connection of these widespread gangs with each other. He has also augmented his facts by a few hints on detection which he hopes may be of use to his brother officers in the Police.

Captain Harvey's Report on the Koravars is confined to the six classes of Kaikaries found in the Bombay Presidency and Rajputana. His enquiries did not extend to the Madras Presidency, to which this great class of the criminal tribes of India belong. Mr. Paupa Rao Naidu has had much to do with the Koravars of this Presidency and describes several sub-divisions whose field of operations extends over the Madras and Bombay Presidencies, the Nizam's Dominions, and other tracts of country farther north. The most important of these classes is the Kabadi, or Uppu Koravar, who evidently derives his name from the fact that in by-gone days he was the owner of caravans of bullocks and asses, and like the Brinjaris of the north used them for the purpose of conveying such commodities as salt and grain from the sea-coast to the interior of the country, bartering the same for forest and other produce. After the introduction of railways in India the Uppu Koravar was reduced to poverty, but being accustomed to lead an itinerant life, he adhered to it and was forced to resort to crime for a living. The other sub-divisions which Mr. Paupa Rao deals with are the Karuvepalai Koravars, the Kavalkar Koravars, the Pachakuthi Koravars, the Konchi or Koochi Koravars, the Kallu Koravars, the Gadepatti Kaikaries, the Koot Kaikaries and the Bhagantree Kaikaries, all of whom derive their names from the ostensible occupations which they follow. For instance, the Bhagantree Kaikaries are rustic musicians who play at marriages and feasts in villages in the Madras and Bombay Presidencies. At the same time they are always on the look-out for suitable opportunities for committing crime. A good deal of useful information is given by the author about the dress and appearance of the various classes enumerated above, and about their religious ceremonies, their marriage customs, their Panchayats or mode of settling disputes, their method of forming gangs for purposes of crime and depredation, their systems of robbery, and of disposing of stolen property, all of which are extremely interesting and cannot fail to be of use to the members of the Police Department, particularly to the policeman in this Presidency, as the character and tendency of the Koravars in the South of India are exhaustively dealt with. The author states that there is not a single District in this Presidency where the Koravars do not give trouble of some kind or another. Like the Gipsies in England and the Zingaris of Europe, almost all of these criminal tribes have an argot or slang language by means of which they communicate with each other; and in a very interesting confession given by a Kaikarie approver before Captain Harvey, a vocabulary is given of the slang language used by that tribe, in which its Southern origin is recognisable by the admixture of Tamil and Canarese words with Hindustani and Marathi.

NAVAYANA DIGITIZED BY eGANGOTRI

# The "Times of India."

A Robber Tribe.—Mr. Paupa Rao Naidu, who seems to enjoy a considerable reputation as a detective officer in the Madras Presidency, has brought out an interesting brochure on the Korawars, Erukulas or Kaikaries, a great robber family which has its settlements extending practically over the whole of peninsular India, from Cape Comorin to Rajputana. Their customs, manners and dialects point to a Southern origin. They seem to have belonged originally to one parent-stock, serving at first as servants in temples, from which they were ousted by outsiders. They would seem to have next earned a livelihood as carriers, a profession of which the extension of railways has done much to reduce the importance. Mr. Naidu, although his interest in the tribe is primarily that of a Police officer, is not without compassion for their hard position; and his suggestions at the end of his essay as to the necessity of helping them to settle down permanently as peaceful inhabitants have in some measure been anticipated by the Police Commission in their Report. These tribes have a regular system of jurisdiction. Each of them has its special preserve into which none of the others can intrude. Each has some ostensible occupation which, however, is only a means of reconnoitring the territory to be invaded without arousing suspicion. The women are chiefly employed in avocations which are light and easy. They go about hawking herbs, baskets or brooms, or engage in tattooing and soothsaying, both of which occupations give them access to the homes of the village population. Others perform as village minstrels; yet others serve the public in an even less honourable way. Boys and girls are freely adopted into the tribes, and are schooled from infancy to deny everything asked of them by the villagers or officers. The marriage tie is held in convenient elasticity amongst these people. There is no limit to the number of wives a man may marry. The woman is at liberty to change her husband whenever she likes, though polyandry does not seem to be recognised among the tribal customs. When any man of a gang goes to jail, the wife selects another partner for the period of her husband's absence, going back to him on his release, with all her children, including those born during the period of enforced separation. A curious idea of female respectability prevails among some of these tribes. "A woman who marries seven men successively one after another, either after the death of her husbands or after divorce," writes Mr. Naidu, "is considered to be a respectable lady, and is called Pedda Boyisari. She takes the lead in marriages and other religious ceremonies." One peculiarity of these robber gangs is that they are intensely domestic. Never do the men move without their women and children from place to place. The Naik or headman is held in the greatest respect. He is maintained by his gang in comparative affluence, and rarely accompanies it on its marauding expeditions. But it is his duty to use all his efforts to obtain the release of any of his gang should he get into trouble. Among the members of the gang itself, the rule is simple. Each gets his share when the expedition has been successful, and even the old and infirm are given a portion of the booty. If any of the members get caught, the rest of the gang has to provide for the maintenance of his dependents during his "stay in jail" as Mr. Naidu phrases it in his ingenuous fashion. Mr. Naidu suggests that village officers are not always innocent of complicity in the doings of these depredators. The manner in which fowls and cattle are stolen in broad daylight by the Korawars is described, and hints are given as to the best way of saving property when waylaid by them in one of their haunts. It is the inveterate craving for drink possessed by these tribes that most often leads to their crimes being traced. They cannot keep away from the grog-shop for any length of time, and it is from there that the Police often get the clues which lead to their detection.

# INTRODUCTION.

IT may be said that a Police Officer's lot is usually a hard and bitter one, while he is engaged in the detection of Dacoities and Burglaries committed by the Korawars, Erukulas or Kaikaries, a most daring, cunning, and troublesome class of thieves; and mine was all the more so once, for my life itself was in jeopardy then, as will appear from the concluding portion of my booklet No. 1. "The History of Railway Thieves with Hints on Detection."

2. With a view to benefit my brother officers and the public, I thought it fit to discuss in the following few pages, the ways and habits of this criminal class, adding to the experience I have had as a Police Officer, a fund of information I managed to collect, from various reports and books in the Madras and Bombay Presidencies and the Mysore Provinces, during my travels all over India when I had the good fortune of being deputed to assist Messrs. H. A. Stuart, C.S.I., I.C.S., and F. Fawcett, the able and energetic officers of the Central Criminal Intelligence Department. It is to the untiring zeal of these gentlemen, and their advice to me to collect whatever information I possibly could, about every criminal tribe in India, that I owe most of the matter appearing in this booklet, which I number 11 of the series, "The Criminal Tribes of India."

3. Surely it would savour of ingratitude if I omitted to express my thanks and acknowledge my indebtedness to the officers mentioned in this booklet, for the help that I have had from their personal information, admirable reports and publications, and to my friends Messrs. John Robert Kalyanaramier, B.A., L.T., and Coka Seethayya

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Naidu, B.A., for their assistance in bringing out this booklet, while I was much engaged in official work.

4. If I am spared and if I meet with the kind of encouragement that I was given by the enlightened Travancore Government under the counsel of Mr. V. P. Madhava Rao and by the Inspector-General of Police, Central Provinces, in ordering for 100 and 50 copies respectively, of my booklet No. I, for the use of their Subordinate Police, my booklets Nos. III and IV, about some more troublesome gangs, whose crimes are not confined to one Province, will appear shortly. My ambition to put in type before the public, all my notes about every important wandering criminal tribe of India is so great that I will try my best to fulfil it at no distant date.

5. Lastly, I offer my hearty thanks to those who have already encouraged me, by making use of these notes, and to those who are likely to encourage me further by offering me suggestions and alterations in this and in No. I booklet.

BEZWADA,
*15th October*, 1905.

M. PAUPA ROW NAIDU.

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# KORAWARS, ERUKULAS OR KAIKARIES.

Origin and diverse names.

THIS criminal tribe which appears to be the largest of all in India is the great robber family in the South, just as the Bowries are in the North. This class has assumed various names according to their settlement in the different parts of India as far North as Rajputana and as far South as Cape Comorin, such as for instance :—(1) Korawars, (2) Korichas, (3) Korawaroo, (4) Erukulas, (5) Kaikaries, (6) Murgandas.

2. Whatever might have been the extent to which they have spread, their Gotras, their language, their peculiar customs and manners have all been kept up with their Southern brethren of the Dravidian country to which they no doubt belonged at first. The names of their Gotras (clans) and their language which is only corrupted Tamil, being mixed now and then with Telugu and Canarese, seem to impress strongly that they all belonged originally to one parent-stock of Tamil origin devoting their services to temples in the South. The names of their four Gotras show clearly that they were once the innocent and recognized servants of the temples and were driven out of them gradually by Poojaries of the higher castes.

(1) The word *Korawars* seems to be derived from *kuram*, a Tamil word meaning fortune-telling, most of this class wandering as soothsayers ostensibly. It is the name given to them by the people south of Nellore and Cuddapah in the Madras Presidency.

(2) The word *Korichas* is only a corruption of *Korawars*, used by the people of the Ceded Districts which are adjacent to the Tamil country.

(3) *Korawaroo* is also the same word with the Canarese ending, used by the people of Mysore.

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(4) *Erukulas* is a Telugu word from *eruka* meaning *to foretell*, used by the people of the Northern Circars and the Telugu portion of the Nizam's Dominions.

(5) *Kaikaries* is a Tamil word, *kai* meaning hand and *kar* a fellow, kar being a common affix used. Probably the word means to foretell by consulting the hand or it may mean a common labourer. Some of the fellows pretend to be palmists also. This expression is current all over Bombay, Guzerat, Rajputana and Central India.

(6) *Murganda* or *Pamla* are terms used by the people of Baroda, Khandesh and a portion of the Central Provinces. The former is a corruption of Boorgandy meaning *basket-maker*. Pamla also means the same thing.

Their divisions.

3. Their Gotras or clans or major divisions are four in number and according to their gradation, they are :—I. Sāthepāti, II. Kāvādi, III. Mānapāti, IV. Mendragutti. They are all corrupted Tamil words.

I. *Sathepati* is a corruption of *Sathupadi* which means adorning a Hindu deity with flowers, jewels and vestments.

II. *Kavadi* shortly pronounced is *Kavdi* meaning a pole carried on the shoulders with two baskets pendant from both its ends in which are contained offerings for a deity or temple.

III. *Manapati* is a corruption of *Manpadi* which means singing in praise of God when He is worshipped in a temple.

IV. *Mendragutti* is a corruption of *Menrikutti* which means stitching a pair of shoes and presenting it to the temple, a custom still prevalent at Tirupathi Balaji and other important shrines.

Of these four major divisions the first two are, or rather were, considered superior to the other two, a Kāvādi man being styled Pōthuvādu (male) and a Sāthepāti man, Penti (female) meaning thereby in the Telugu language that they are inoga-

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mous with a preference in favour of Kāvādi men that they are more entitled to marry Sāthepāti women than Sāthepāti men the Kāvādi women. But this old custom gradually died away and they are now marrying the members of each other of all the four classes promiscuously, each class claiming superiority over the rest according to their circumstances.

House names.

4. They have innumerable family or house names, such as Wuyyalu, Bandi, Avula, Mekala, Maramesi, Mota, Devara, Bochu, Malle, Peetla, Salla, Gogula, Goddeti, Garika, Kothi, Ponna, Katta, Kampa, Gajjala and so on according to some peculiar incident in their family. These house names are found more or less in all Gotrams throughout Madras, Bombay, Central India, Rajputana and the Central Provinces wherever they are met with.

Their sub-divisions.

5. According to their ostensible professions and apparent means of livelihood, they are again divided into sub-divisions in different Provinces as follows :—

(1) Kabādi, Uppu or Bidar Korawars.
(2) Karuvepalei or Karepāku Korawars.
(3) Thabbai Korawars.
(4) Koodekatti, Gampa or Bootee Korawars.
(5) Kāvalkār Korawars.
(6) Pachakuthi or Gadde Korawars or Pariki Erukulas.
(7) Koonche, Koochi or Oochla Korawars.
(8) Kallu Korawars or Wadde Erukulas or Ran Kaikaries.
(9) Gadepatti Kaikaries.
(10) Koot or Agadee Kaikaries.
(11) Pam Kaikaries.
(12) Bhajantree Korawars.

Though the above Gotrams and house or family names are found in every one of them, yet some of these sub-divisions are exogamous ; but in their common pursuit of robbery they are all identical with no distinction whatever.

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6. The first officer who seems to have studied well their habits, customs and modes of thieving was Captain Harvey, who, in his capacity of Assistant General Superintendent of Thuggee and Dacoity Department, rendered signal service on the lines proposed by Sir William Sleeman, who it was that organized the Department and put down that most horrible of crimes, Thuggee, by his unflinching exertions. According to Harvey's report and the evidence collected by him, this tribe gradually migrated from the South, over four centuries ago, to the North as caravans carrying salt and grain from sea coast towns into the interior and bringing in return forest produce to the sea coast. It is also suggested by an officer of some experience that they might have been used by the Transport Department to supply cattle to the Regiments in the frequent disturbances before the advent of the British Government and to take part in the depredations made by such Regiments, sharing the spoil with them.

Captain Harvey's note on them in 1852.

7. The second officer who dwelt on this tribe was Major Gunthorpe of the Berar Police in 1882. He also studied their manners and customs closely and in his "Notes on Criminal Tribes" he has recorded many salient facts about their *modus operandi*; but his knowledge seems to have been confined to Bombay and Hyderabad.

Major Gunthorpe on them in 1882.

8. Mr. Stevenson of the Madras Police has also recorded a brief but valuable note about them so far as his experience went in the Tamil portion of the Madras Presidency.

Mr. Stevenson on them in 1884.

9. "Notes on Criminal Classes" published in 1892 by Mr. Mullaly of the Madras Police are more elaborate and describe minutely all the habits and customs of this class all over, though he seems to have observed them well only in the Madras Presidency.

Mr. Mullaly on them in 1892.

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10. Though there seems thus to be no necessity for a separate report from me about them, handled as they have been already by such master-hands, yet the recent discoveries made about the connections of those gangs induce me to lay before the public in general and the department in particular my experiences with them, adding a few illustrations and instances which, it is hoped, will be useful to my brother officers.

The author's motive to write these notes.

11. Before proceeding with the history of this tribe, the reader should note that it is distinct from another known as the Ina Korawars or Alagaries or Capemaries of Southern India to whom I devoted a chapter in my booklet on "Railway Thieves." They are supposed to have been once an off-shoot of this great tribe, but they are now quite distinct from them in their religion, manners, customs, language and every other characteristic. They are comparatively more refined in their dress and manners and pass for common town or village folk in the towns or villages where they are met with. They never join this class in crime.

Ina Korawars or Capemaries not to be classed with this.

12. The Korawars or Kaikaries are now found all over from Cape Comorin to Rajputana. Even so far back as 1852, these Kaikaries were found infesting the Meywar territory in Rajputana and Guzerat as will be seen from the account given by Captain Harvey. His report which confines itself to the Bombay Presidency and Rajputana shows that there were six classes of the Kaikaries, *viz.*, Gam Kaikaries, Koonchee Kaikaries, Koot Kaikaries, Sursul Kaikaries and Ran Kaikaries. To quote his own words "they infest the Meywar country and the whole tract South of the Narbudda, from Broach along the Coast, into the Northern and Southern Concans, then above the Ghats, through the Poona, Nuggur, and Khandesh Zillahs, they extend into the Nagpoor country, and passing again downwards overrun a part of His Highness the Nizam's territories, the Sholapoor District and

Their early extension in Bombay.

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the Sattara State, from which they occasionally branch into the unhilly tracts of the Southern Mahratta country, though not often found below the Kistna."

13. Probably Captain Harvey's enquiries did not extend to the Madras Presidency where they had their origin as we have seen. That may be why he said that they had not been found below the Kistna. But as far as his jurisdiction was concerned, the enquiries seem to have been exhaustive and the details of information followed were for the most part from old members of the gangs, some of them having been made approvers. Judging from their extension, it appears as if each gang selected a certain portion of the country as its field of operations. The following three paragraphs on their operations, extracted *verbatim* from Captain Harvey's report will be found interesting.

Division of their jurisdiction.

14. "What will be regarded as the most astonishing feature in the system observed by these consummate robbers, is the unbounded license with which they have divided and sub-divided the whole country into divisions and districts, a family or collateral branch of the tribe being appointed to each division and a leader to each district; this he is able to call particularly his own 'preserve,' being that in which alone, according to their laws and restrictions on the subject, he is allowed to practise dacoity.

15. "Thus there are the Meywar gangs, who can depredate through Nimar down to the mouth of the Narbudda; the Kandesh gangs, who visit the tract lying between Dhoolia, Nassick, Aurungabad and Balapoor in Berar; the Nassick gangs, who take the country between Kopergam on the Godavery and Ahmednuggur; the Poona gangs, who stretch up to Surat, and into the two Concans and the Sattara State; the Sholapur gangs, who claim the countries from Punderpoor through the Sholapur Zillah into a part of the Nizam's territories; the Wusmut Nandhur gangs, who entered from those places to Hingolee and to Sholapur; there are also a few

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gangs in the Nagpoor State, but to which my information does not yet reach.

16. "These gangs do not altogether confine themselves exclusively to the above tracts, for being altogether wanderers, they move about from district to district, but will not generally attempt any affair in the quarter of any other gang unless they can do so clandestinely, that is without the cognizance of the leaders practising in that particular tract : sometimes a gang, not having met with very profitable opportunities in their own line of country, and getting information of a place promising booty in another, will, if they find they are not able to undertake the enterprise without the knowledge of the gang in whose sub-division the place may be, send word to the leader of the latter, and apprize him of what they are about to do ; when perhaps both gangs will join in the undertaking : or, in order to secure a share in the booty, the leader belonging to the place will lend two or more of his dacoits to the invading leader."

Kabādi or Uppu Korawars.

17. Kabādi or Uppu or Bidar Korawars (*Kabadi* and *Bidar* mean pack of bullocks and *Uppu* means salt) were once a very important and useful class, owning hundreds of asses, bullocks and barren cows utilized largely in carrying salt and grain from the sea coast towns and villages into the interior and bringing back from there all kinds of forest and other inland produce. They were thus instrumental in averting scarcities and famines prevalent in certain localities, by fetching the grain and other necessaries from the deltaic tracts, in which good part they competed fairly with Lambadies or Branjaries who were also of the same humane profession owning hundreds of animals in each tanda. It was on such philanthropic duties that both these classes thrived before the advent of Railways and metalled roads. It was thus that these Korawars gradually gained ground towards the North in Guzerat and Rajputana and in the Central Provinces through Hyderabad.

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Korawars and Lambadies acted also as spies and rendered useful service in the Transport Department during the régime of Hyder Ali and his son Tippu Sultan. They must have also been useful to the many invaders who devastated Southern India enriching themselves by the looting that invariably followed the many battles fought. But since the introduction of these Railways, which they cursed as ruinous to India—and they seem to be justified in so doing from their standpoint—and, in proportion, to the extent to which the iron road spread its mighty network, these Korawars and Lambadies and their like had to sell away their animals gradually and having no more transporting profession to follow were reduced to abject poverty. The reserving of forests and hills added to their misery and it became a question of 'to be' or 'not to be' with them. Being accustomed to a wandering life for many generations, they still kept it up but were forced to crime for a living. They were not accustomed to manual labour though some of them, here and there, who since settled peacefully in some villages, join the villagers in work. The generality of them who risked not the consequences, found it easier to live by dishonest means than by hard work, which method, besides involving hard manual labour, brought them only a slow and poor return.

18. The local budmashes help them in committing crime. Such unscrupulous and criminal Korawars are found all over the Bombay and Madras Presidencies and in the Nizam's Dominions. While writing these notes, I was informed that they were very active in the Lingasugur and Raichur Districts of Hyderabad. Several gangs of Manvi Taluq in Raichur District have lately committed many dacoities in the Ceded Districts adjoining. It is the Village Munsiffs or patels there to whom a portion of their booty is given and who form their receivers, that afford an asylum to these worthies. Property connected with many dacoities in the Bellary District was recovered from the possession of the

Hyderabad gangs.

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Police patel of Sadapur in Manvi Taluq by the British Police who were careful enough to avoid the assault the village officials attempted.

Karuvepalei Korawars.

19. Next in point of importance come the Karuvepalei Korawars. They also used to have packs of bullocks and asses, and travelled like Uppu Korawars as caravans in times of yore, but are now moving about from place to place selling spice leaves called Karuvepalei (*Bergiria Konigi*), which the Hindus use generally in their culinary preparations to add flavour to them. This leaf is collected plentifully in forests and jungles and conveyed thence to villages and towns for sale. They also collect other useful produce of forests and have them sold through their women as an ostensible means of livelihood. This class is considered in some places as the worst lot of highway robbers and dacoits as will be seen later.

Thabbai and Koodakatti Korawars.

20. Then come the classes three and four, Thabbai and Koodakatti Korawars, who number more than any other class and who are more settled in towns and villages permanently in pucka built houses and huts selling as an ostensible means of livelihood bamboo tatties, date mats, baskets, ropes, rope nets, slings, granaries (long baskets for storage of grain), brooms and other articles of domestic use. These two classes are as equally dangerous as the others, if not more. Settling in towns and villages just in their outskirts, they form an acquaintance with the local people, and are in touch with the budmashes and goldsmiths among them. Thus they are able not only to steal easily, but also to dispose of the stolen property more easily than the rest of the classes. They are in that way useful to their brethren of other gangs and villages in getting rid of their stolen property whenever they are suspected in a crime. Thus these two classes are thriving better than the others. They have been lending money to villagers and merchants for interest on mortgages of immoveable property and also dealing in

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hides and bones occasionally. The men wear silver waist-cords and bangles and their women gold and silver jewels. They also tie better cloths to pass for men and women belonging to more civilized communities. The illustration No. 1 is of such a gang with old convicts in it. Such gangs also nominally own lands and cultivate them but nowhere do I see it to any large extent.

Kavalkar Korawars.

21. As for class five the Kāvalkār (*Kaval* means *watching*) Korawars, they are employed as village watchmen just as the Bhills are in Khandesh, Ramoosees in Bombay, Bedars in the Mahratta country, Dandasis in Ganjam and Orissa, Kallars in the South and Yanadies in the Northern Circars and Nellore. They occupy huts in the villages or in the fields just outside of them. They are maintained by the villagers with payment of a kind of annual tax in grain at the thrashing season. At times they watch a number of villages situated near each other. They annually get a few sheep from the shepherds and herdsmen in return for their letting their animals go unmolested. They are given food and presents at every marriage or other feast in the villages under their watch. If the villagers ever fail to give them these blackmails, their grain and sheep will not be safe, their very houses will be broken into, and they themselves cannot hope to leave their village with any property about their person ; nor are their straw yards safe from fire. These Korawars often commit thefts in villages which are not so watched by any of their fraternity. Should there be any theft committed in a village under their watch, it is their bounden duty to trace out the culprits and turn them over to the proper authority. This class is found only in the South.

Gadde or Pachakutti Korawars.

22. Then comes the 6th class Pachakutti, Gadde or Pariki Korawars. These women start with a basket and a winnow into a village proclaiming their ostensible profession of tattooing (Pachakutti) and soothsaying (Gadde), which they do for grain or money. When unfortunate village

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booty they leave the neighbourhood and travel very fast, sometimes covering 20 or 30 miles at one stretch. The stolen property is invariably secured by them underground in some secret spot at a short distance from their camp. Sometimes they hark back and commit burglaries in houses or shops situated in the Town or village wherein they had previously encamped, or when it was not convenient to bring the buried stolen property with them, they return from the next camp and bring it. When caught with the stolen property by one or two constables they assault them and run away throwing away all the property if they cannot conveniently carry.

Mr. Pogson says that the presence of a ball of wax, a pair of small scales and a small stone something like a stopping stone used to test gold, silver and other metals, is a sure sign that the owner is a Bauri. A piece of cloth is well waxed with the ball and then twisted—this takes the place of a candle when a gang breaks into a house.

Distribution of the booty.

21. They generally wait for moonlight nights for the distribution of the stolen property, and before commencing it they consult the omen with their wheat grains as already described. In the presence of the headman the entire property is divided into five shares. One of these shares is sub-divided into four parts which are allotted, one to their deity, another to the men that have become old or sick, the third to helpless widows that are hanging on the group, and the fourth to the leader of the gang. The remaining four shares are equally divided among all the men that took part in the commission of the offence, and thereafter each is master of his own share. They generally contrive to acquaint themselves with local receivers, or confidential agents who help them to dispose of the stolen jewels which are invariably broken up and disfigured to prevent all possibility of identification.

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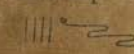
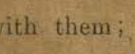
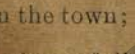
22. They are able to communicate with each other in a peculiar slang without being understood by those around them, and they leave marks and signs to give information of their movements to their partisans when moving in advance of them. Thus, when they leave one camp and go to another, they leave a mark with charcoal on one of the walls of the mantap or chattram which they had occupied, thus—  or . The lines indicate the number of the group that left and the curved line indicates the direction in which they proceeded. If the strokes are enclosed in a circle, the mark has another meaning, either that they are in the District or Town or that they have property with them;  . If the circle surrounds the stroke and the loop is closed it means the gang is encamped in the town;  . They also make similar lines at crossings of different roads.

Secret signs.

23. A note on Bauris written by Mr. Pogson while Superintendent of Police, Kandesh, in 1903, will not fail to be interesting. Mr. Pogson was contributing notes to the *Times of India* on some of the principal criminal tribes of the Bombay Presidency and was considered to be one of the best Superintendents of his time in Bombay, but he passed away from us—met with an early grave.

Mr. Pogson's account of the Bauris in 1903.

24. He says that the Bauris in their disguise of Sadus or Gosains, generally wear a *mala* of tulsi beads round their neck. On arriving at a village the eldest or most venerable-looking of the gang is placed under a tree or some other conspicuous spot and spoken of as the *guru*. The other members of the gang go into the village, and on the pretence of collecting alms for their guru, a most holy man,

Curious way of disguise.

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they go from house to house begging, at the same time determining from the ornaments, the female inmates wear whether it is worth breaking into or not. The gang moves off the same or the next day. At the next halting place the same programme is gone through, and so on till the dark night period arrives, when they commence operations by breaking into the houses already selected.

25. Bauris generally make a hole by the side of the door, put their arm through and open the door from inside. They often, however, effect entrance into the house underneath the sill. The instrument used is either the *gyan*, which is carried concealed in the folds of the cloth worn over the shoulder of one of the gang, or a miniature kind of crowbar, which is hidden in the bamboo staves often carried by these men. The staff has iron rings round it. If these are pulled off the bar will be seen inside. Sometimes they use their steel spoons with a sharp point, about 9 inches long, the rod about an inch in diameter. A pair of big tongs, which they carry ostensibly for trimming and holding fire, is also used by them in house-breaking. When there is a *gyan* or stolen property with the gang, it is carried by one or two men. This man or men are never with the rest of the gang. He or they are either a mile in front or a mile behind the gang. They do not often take stolen property back with them, if they are able to dispose of it before they leave. A favourite disguise, when returning, is that of a dealer in glass bangles.

**House-breaking implements.**

Gyan. Spoon. Stave. Tongs.

26. In 1892 and 1893 these Bauri gangs gave much trouble in several places of the Anantapur District while I was Police Inspector at Gooty. A constable of mine caught two Bauris at Jakkalcheruvu, about six miles from Gooty, with the stolen property connected with a burglary in

Their movements in Anantapur in 1892.

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a shop at Tadpatri about 30 miles from Gooty, whereat they had encamped about eight days previous to their arrest. When caught, they assaulted the constable and ran over a hill leaving behind the bundle of stolen property —all new cloths. They were recaptured with the help of the villagers.

Their convictions in Mysore.

27. In 1901 no less than 40 Bauris were caught in the Mysore State in five batches, and some of them were severely dealt with as thousands of Rupees worth of stolen property connected with burglaries in Mysore and Bangalore Towns was recovered from them. A quarrel among the women of the gangs appears to have brought about the arrests. Details of these cases were published in the *Mysore and Madras Police Gazettes* of 1901.

Their trouble in Khandesh and neighbouring Districts in 1904.

28. According to an account given by the Assistant Inspector-General of Police of the Criminal Investigation Branch, Bombay, a gang of Bauris gave much trouble in Khandesh, Sholapur, Nasik and Ahmedabad Districts of the Bombay Presidency. In the beginning of 1904 a large gang operated in Ahmedabad which was prosecuted under Chapter VIII of Criminal Procedure Code and seven men were committed to the jail. "The defence set up by two of them was certainly original and ingenious, as they pleaded that they, under the leadership of a Bauri woman named Narma, had left the Meerut District with orders from the District Superintendent of Police to tour the country and arrest fugitive offenders. They called themselves Rajputs and explained their presence at the encampment by saying that Narma had kept them there to watch over these Bauris. Two of her party and three of the Ahmedabad gang went on tour through Broach, Surat, etc."

29. "The District Superintendents of Police, Muzafarnagar and Meerut, to whom a reference was promptly made, denied all knowledge of Narma and her party.

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The Assistant Inspector-General of Police, after careful enquiries was convinced that Narma had been playing a clever and profitable game, in that she was blackmailing each Bauria encampment she came across. She was known and feared by all but she could not be caught."

A Bauri woman blackmailing other Bauris.

30. The same officer also writes that a number of Bauris live in the Southern Presidency and give information to others of the tribe, who come down every year from Muzafarnagar. There is no doubt there exists active co-operation between the two places. The Post Office is very largely used as a medium, by Bauris down South, to make remittances to their wives and families in Muzafarnagar. Just about this time in the same year, 1904, a gang of Delhiwala Bauris was captured by the Broach Police in Broach Taluq. The gang consisted of seven Bauris, a Gujar who had turned Bauri and married a Bauria, and a Madrasee. In another instance one Govind Sundar found with a Baurie gang was a Madrasee. He gave the Police information of their crimes in the Bombay Presidency.

Union of Madrasees with Bauris.

31. In 1903, the Superintendent of Police, Balaghat, Central Provinces, wrote that these Bauris committed many burglaries at Mandla, Sankha, Gondia and other places on the Bengal-Nagpore Railway. When they had put up in Pondi village, one of them posed as the *guru* of the party, the remaining five being Chelas; they were all dressed as Bairagi-Sadhus, and each carried on their shoulders *Kawars* from which were suspended bottles containing so-called Ganges water.

32. So it is clear that Bauris are not now particular to the twelve villages of the Muzafarnagar District. They will also be found at many other places in the Punjab, in Marwar, Bhopal, Bombay, Central Provinces, Bengal and Madras under some disguise or other.

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33. During the year 1906, a gang of about 26 Bauris were arrested on suspicion at Bellary. Enquiries about them proved that a gang of them had settled at Tadpatri in the Anantapur District, temporarily, some as sweetmeat sellers, others in the disguise of a religious party—guru and disciples, halted in a temple at Tadpatri and gave out (to some receivers) that the guru was making gold at the rate of one tola a day and that they were secretly selling melted gold. They had committed many burglaries including a heavy one in the village of Yellanoor in the Tadpatri Taluq, and it was the stolen property concerned in that case which they were thus selling. When some of them were arrested at Kopbal and Bellary, and were confronted with a Bauri informant of the Criminal Investigation Department of Hyderabad (Deccan), it was ascertained that about 15 more tolas of gold had been buried near the walls of the Tadpatri temple. The gold was subsequently recovered and 18 of the gang were convicted. They were transferred subsequently to the Muzafarnagar jail. To identify them during their trial, the Muzafarnagar Police were summoned. This gang consisted of both the Delhiwalla Bauris and those of Muzafarnagar, but who lived long in this Southern Presidency in some town or other.

Their excursions in the Ceded Districts in 1906.

34. Just as I was writing these notes, I heard that a number of this gang had been arrested in Jammalamadugu, Cuddapah District, in November 1906, and that another gang of five had been arrested at Cocanada against whom many previous convictions in different parts of India were traced. It will be interesting to note that some of these were found to have been connected with the members of the Mysore gangs.

35. It is to be observed that no less than six boxes of oil and attar were seized with the party at Bellary mentioned just now. They have lately assumed this form of disguise and taken to selling attar and scents to the public as doing

Their new disguise as attar sellers.

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so affords easy access to the houses of rich people, and gives them facility to study their topography and thus to pursue their nefarious purposes. Very often house-breaking instruments and stolen property can thus be deposited in such attar boxes.

Counterfeiting Rupees.

36. So far I have dealt with the offences in general against property. I now come to the subject of their counterfeiting coins. In the Administration Report of the North-West Provinces for 1899, the Bauris have been noted as "expert coiners and passers of counterfeit coin."

Kichucks an offshoot.

37. An offshoot of this Bauri tribe by the name of Kichucks is well-known in the Districts along the Northern frontier of Bengal. They have for years past been accustomed to make annual incursions into Bengal, in the cold weather, between the months of October and January, travelling as far east as the Rangapur District. Their numbers are said to have fallen off of late, and their incursions less regular. The tribe gives out that they came from the Districts of Ghazipur and Gorruckpur. A large number of them have red hair, and do not use oil for applying to their head or body. They often call themselves Cashmiri Nats. They move out with their wives and children and cattle in gangs of large numbers and live in tents and rude mat huts, either under the trees or on the 'maidans' but always away from villages.

38. Combined with their ostensible means of livelihood, *viz.*, begging, jugglery, sorcery and medicine in all branches of which they are very unskilful, they resort to the crime of cattle-lifting, passing counterfeit coin and theft. They drive stray cattle amongst their own herd and if not claimed by the time they move on to their next encampment, they misappropriate them, but if claimed, they declare they have nothing to do with them. One of their favourite forms of crime is to raise a dispute with the money changers



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in the "hats," during which they either pass counterfeit coins, or in a scuffle, concocted beforehand, snatch the changer's money.

39. They are also said to be by no means unwilling to commit violent crime, such as murder, robbery, or dacoity, as opportunities present themselves. When brought into collision with the police or with a body of villagers in connection with crimes committed by them, it is the habit of the male members of the tribe to abscond for the time and leave matters to their women, who are well able to protect themselves, as they exhibit the most violent passions, threatening to kill themselves or their children. Often they proceed to the extent of wounding themselves with knives or other cutting instruments, or throwing their children violently on the ground or otherwise maltreating them, with the sole object of deterring the police and villagers from interfering further with them.

40. In 1904 no less than about 80 Bauris were arrested by the Police of Indore under the personal supervision of the Inspector-General of Police, and a large number of counterfeit Rupees, of very base metal cast in moulds, was recovered through the men and their women who had them buried in different places. These coins though very nearly resembling those of the Chapperbands in all respects, yet the milling in these is reported to be finer. The composition and the make of their moulds are also of a better kind inasmuch as they use powder of hard stuffs instead of mud, and also mix it with some gummy substance. Iron frames are also used to hold the two pieces of a mould together, and there is a hole on the side to pour the melted metal into the cavity. The details of this process of making coins I refrain from publishing lest they should prove dangerous to the public. Bauris do not seem to have been seized with counterfeit rupees in the Madras Presidency, but they have been much in evidence in connection with burglaries.

Counterfeiting rupees in Indore.

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KORAWARS OF MADRAS.

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KORWA PANCHAYET AT A TODDY-SHOP.

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It is also said that the men pledge their wives and unmarried daughters and take them back when the pledge is redeemed, with any children born in the interval ; but this is denied except among Koot Kaikaries and Erukula Bogamvaru who actually live by prostitution. A woman who marries seven men successively one after another, either after the death of her husbands or after divorce, is considered to be a respectable lady and is called "Pedda Boyisani." She takes the lead in marriages and other religious ceremonies.

Settlement of caste disputes.

10. Every caste dispute is settled among themselves in a Panchayet generally at a toddy shop. When the decision is arrived at with a penalty of fine to be paid by the man or men at fault, the fine is collected at once and spent in drinking. When a Korawa is suspected of a crime in a gang, one member of each hut or family including the man or woman suspected, convene a Meeting or Panchayet at a toddy shop. A new pot is filled with boiling oil or ghee and a coin or ring is thrown into it. The suspected person is then directed to take it out. If innocent, the person readily consents to it ; but, if guilty, he or she will at once decline to do so. The men and women are so blindly superstitious that they implicitly believe that if the person is innocent, the hand will not get scorched. Even innocent men or women have in this way to be pronounced guilty when they refuse to dip their hands into the hot oil or when of course they scorch their hands after dipping them. They often carry a pad stuck with cowries and place it in front of the pot calling it the deity Kollapuramma.

Constitution of gangs.

11. A gang consists of men, women and children, but no fixed number of them. Never do the men move without their women and children from place to place. A gang generally consists of all Gotrams and many house names so that they can intermarry conveniently. It has always an old member known to the Police or to the Village Munsiff as the

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headman or Naik who guides the others in crimes and conspiracies. They do not give out their names or numbers to the authorities. The male members will be found different each time they are met with as some of the gang will be loitering outside in jungles and fields especially when the Police attempt to examine the gang. Whenever the Police examine a wandering gang, taking it by surprise, some old members are sure to be absent and some new members present; and these last the officers mark as "supernumeraries" in their lists of gangs. It is owing to this arrangement that the women will always be out of proportion to the men, with babies in their arms and carrying sometimes.

Naiks.

42. The Naik is held in high esteem by a gang and will always be saved at any cost. He is usually a jail bird and an expert at crime, obeyed as implicitly by the rest of the gang as the commander of a Regiment is. He gets a full share of the booty though he does not accompany his men or take any active part in a crime; and when he does, he is given a double share. He is bound in return to use all his efforts to obtain the release of any of his gang should he get into trouble. If they are unsuccessful in their exploits or property is not available, contributions are made by the rest of the gang for his maintenance.

43. Sometimes an innocent man undertakes to go to jail with the object of saving his Naik or other friend when he happens to be an old jail bird, on the understanding that his wife and children are to be taken care of during his stay in the jail.

Permanent gangs.

44. Some of these classes have taken permanent habitations on the outskirts of villages—hill side villages mostly—or at some distance from them. They generally construct their cluster of huts at some height facing the public roads and footpaths that they might easily observe the approach of any Police officers. With very few exceptions, their permanent huts are of a circular build with a pole in the centre to support the roofing

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which is thatched and a mud wall of about a yard in height all round. Some of these Korawars have constructed houses of pucka build in a row with those of the ryots and a few of them own lands also. In the villages in which they permanently live, they acquire the favour of the village officials by some means or other. The lands mostly serve as a blind, forming only an ostensible means of livelihood; for, their income by them can only be nominal barely meeting the cost of a month's living. In the case of such settlers, you may depend upon it that they hold a promise of succour from the village officials or any influential ryot whenever necessary; for without some such encouragement they can never settle permanently in a village. Such gangs are registered by the Police as permanent gangs. Every one of them has learnt that if five or more of them live together, they are classed as a gang and watched from time to time by Police Officers. They therefore have planned to live separately in twos and threes in the villages a few miles apart from each other in different Police Station limits meeting almost every day unwatched. I may suggest here that all such persons related to each other within a certain radius may be clubbed together and treated as one gang for Police purposes.

Wandering gangs.

45. The others that have no such permanent habitations are known as the wandering gangs, who move about the country with portable huts of an oblong or circular shape consisting of a few bamboo frames and date or palmyra mats thrown over them. They are easily rolled up and carried along with their bag and baggage. They move from place to place encamping on hill sides and plains close to a canal or vanka where they can get fodder and water for their animals, and at a respectable distance from villages for their provisions. Their women and children always follow the men and when they are asked to mention their native place, they can mention none. The wandering gangs sojourn in a place for months together at times till it gets too hot for them or till they secure better lodgings anywhere else.

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Modus Operandi.

46. As has already been stated, these Korawars infest the whole of Central and Southern India. Every one of the classes mentioned above are either dacoits, burglars or thieves, not excepting their women and children. Where there is a Korawa gang encamping, no grain or vegetable is safe in the fields. These itinerant gangs have fixed places of resort, a sort of rendezvous, where they meet after the commission of a crime. They do not as a rule move out in the rainy season, but only in the cold and hot seasons. Their visits to certain spots are periodical and their field of operations embraces usually four or five districts, extending to a distance of about 500 miles and they often move in a circuitous route, changing the course every year.

Their periodical movements.

47. There are certain gangs in the Cuddapah District, in its sub-division of Madanapalli, about Kadiri Hills, and in the Warangal District of the Nizam's Dominions, which periodically move about North Arcot, Nellore, Anantapur, Kurnool, Bellary, Mysore Provinces, Kistna, Guntur and Godavery Districts at certain appointed times changing the direction of their tour every year. They were often suspected in a series of dacoities. Colonel Porteous, one of the ablest of our Inspectors-General, who paid more attention to crime and criminal gangs than to the ordinary routine duties of a Police Officer, used to make a careful study of the geography of the scenes of dacoities occurring each year. He would draw the attention of several Superintendents and Inspectors, whose knowledge is generally confined to their own jurisdictions, and keep them on the alert. He would also order smart Inspectors to co-operate and put down crime, without minding the jealousy that it may give rise to, in some instances himself watching the progress of a case all the time.

Kadiri gangs raiding over Mysore.

48. In 1900 and 1901, the last series of quite a number of dacoities committed by the above gangs have had a prominent notice from the Mysore Government in their Judicial

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Proceedings No. 916 of 8th January, 1902. The Kadiri gangs we are told crossed over to the Anantapur District, committing crime here and there, and then entered the Mysore Provinces where they caused havoc committing innumerable dacoities and robberies on every side, on the roads and in the fields of Mysore, in the Districts of Tumkur, Kolar and Bangalore, so much so that the Mysore authorities had to employ a special staff to combat with the heavy crime reported from all quarters. Several Amaldars, Police Inspectors and Assistant Superintendents were specially deputed to meet the emergency. Some of the Police Officers of Cuddapah and Anantapur also co-operated with them and put down crime bringing several of the offenders to book, though not much of the stolen property was recovered. The Mysore Government, on the detailed and interesting report of Mr. L. Kristnarao, who has the fortune of being often deputed on special duties in the Province, recognized the services of several Police Officers, both of their own and of the two British districts.

Hyderabad gangs in Northern Circars.

49. Just about that time, the Hyderabad gangs traversed the Kistna, Guntur and Godavery districts and committed innumerable heavy house dacoities in the villages, the other criminal tribes of Woddars and Peddeti Gollas also taking a prominent part in them. These dacoities were mostly undetected, though a few of them had seen the Sessions Court. In some of them, property worth some tens of thousands of rupees was stolen and in one, a lakh. These gangs were led by the Woddars, and for the arrest of one of the leaders, a reward of a thousand rupees was offered. He was finally arrested, but with no stolen property about him and was sentenced to ten years' hard labour.

Bellary gangs connected with Bombay gangs.

50. There are permanent gangs in the villages of Rudrapadam, Manapur, Gadiganoor and a few other villages in the Bellary District with strong well-built houses like those of the other villagers. They are related to the Kaikaries of Bangitti Gudial in Kalgatki Taluq and of Singanalli in

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Dharwar Taluq, as also to those of Ningalbanda and Kalagbanda in the same district. They are also related to some gangs of Belgaum, Bijapur and Sholapur, who also live in pucka-built houses, mostly in small Native States. These again have relations in Bombay, as will appear from a Belgaum case narrated later. These Korawars are known to travel by Railway in the disguise of Lingayets, with lingams on their necks or on their arms when they go to far-off places for crime. It is also said that they have organized gangs to meet them in certain places and to commit house-dacoities with them in the districts of Bellary, Cuddapah, Dharwar and Bijapur.

Extension of Southern Mahratta gangs further North in Bombay.

51. Similarly the Kaikaries of Belgaum, Sholapur, Berar and Ahmadnagar go a great distance for dacoities by rail. To illustrate this, the District Superintendent of Ahmadnagar in his note of the 30th January, 1904, reports that "the Chief Constable of Kopargaon arrested two Kaikaries at Kopargaon on the 17th January, 1904, with gold and silver ornaments valued at 1,173 Rupees and 1,009 Rupees cash, which they were taking in a tonga from Yeola to Puntamba. The tonga driver informed the Police that there were four suspicious characters in his tonga at the river side; and when the Chief Constable came to enquire, he found the two men whom he arrested, the other two having meanwhile made off, leaving their shoes in the tonga. The property had been stolen by a gang of Kaikaries in a dacoity committed at Chandod in the Nassik District on the 16th January, 1904. Subsequent enquiries proved that this gang committed many dacoities in Taluqa towns with a gun also in their possession. They used the Railway for committing a crime and escaping after the crime. This Kaikari tribe appears to have been unusually active lately in the Deccan and Southern Mahratta country."

Retirement in rainy seasons.

52. In the rainy season, the wandering tribes make a temporary stay in certain places living in their huts on the sale proceeds of their plunder got in the previous seasons.

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The Kaikaries of Bombay are reported to retire to the Nizam's frontiers or to small Native States before the rainy season; but those of Madras retire to hilly and jungly places with small villages close by. They bury the property on the hills or in the jungles and lodge in the huts wherein the Police can recover nothing. At the close of the rainy season, they disperse in different directions, in gangs of 10 to 20 men and keep themselves within a few miles of one another, so that they may communicate with each other after a crime. As a rule, they encamp on the borders of Districts, Taluqs, or Provinces. They do not generally commit any crime in the taluqs in which they are staying, but go into other taluqs at a distance of over 50 or 60 miles. They are well acquainted with the limits of each police station and soon after the commission of a crime they start off to a place far away from the scene.

Good work of Thagi and Dakaiti Department.

53. The Thagi and Dakaiti Department (since abolished), which was organized at Hyderabad with an Assistant General Superintendent at its head, with powers delegated to him to pardon any convicts that may give useful information regarding their associates, has done very good work in bringing many fugitives to book and in enabling us to ascertain the relationship existing among the various colonizations.

An instance of Bellary gangs in Sholapur.

54. In a recent case in 1903, a gang of twelve *fararí* Kaikaries was arrested in the village of Hidalgi in the Sholapur Taluq by an Inspector of the Thagi and Dakaiti Department. They were of Gadiganoor and Rudrapad villages of the Bellary District with some of Hidalgi. In disposing of the case against them, the District Magistrate remarks thus :—

"I have committed all these Kaikaries (12) to prison for a year under Section 123, C. C. P. Six of them are identified as habitual criminals from the Bellary District. They are all members of a gang of about fifty robbers who have been

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lurking in the neighbourhood of Hidalgi, Sholapur Taluq, for the last six or seven months. Hidalgi is entirely surrounded by Hyderabad territory. The gang skipped forwards and backwards over the frontier, as suited their convenience, to avoid arrest. There are only two constables at Hidalgi and they and the villagers were quite helpless against these banditti. At last Inspector Bhausing of the Thagi and Dakaiti Department made a night attack on the gang in the jungle of Hidalgi and caught them asleep with their women beside them, who, on the alarm, ran back into the village. Twelve robbers were caught, and the rest escaped. In this village there are fifty-two women of the Kaikari caste and only five men, but half the women have babies in arms and several others are pregnant, which shows that they join their predatory errant menfolk at night in the fields. This is the general system of the tribe. They are perfect curses to rural society in this and the neighbouring districts and stringent measures are required to suppress them."

55. A case of dacoity committed in the Belgaum District cannot fail to be interesting both to the Police and to the public, containing as it does many salient points much to their edification.

A heavy Dacoity in Belgaum District.

A dacoity was committed on the 10th July, 1904, at Nipani in Chikodi Taluq on the house of one Santharam Sakaram Kasar, a Sowcar. The house is in the very heart of the town, whose population numbered about 14,000, with a Municipal Council to care for them. The dacoits used stones, clubs, and torches in their violence against the inmates of the house, who consisted of three females and one male at the time. They locked up all the houses in the neighbourhood to prevent their inmates from coming out for help, and the lanes were guarded by them armed with stones and clubs. The man and the three women were then beaten black and blue and finding no information forthcoming about any property, the inhuman wretches applied the torch to the man, when, for fear of the torture, he gave up his keys and pointed out his

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property consisting of jewels to the value of 2,000 Rupees. If he had not done so, surely, kerosine oil would have been poured on him and the torch applied, as is generally done when the culprits fail to wring out information by milder means. They thus made off with the property triumphantly and there was no help from the people of the town till they were far out of reach. They were however arrested on the 4th August, 1904, in the jungle of Davangatti in the small Native State known as Kurandwad under the Kolapur Political Agent. The Chief Constable of the Taluq with some Constables and villagers surrounded the gang at dead of night, when there arose a conflict between them and the gang. In the struggle several escaped and nine were successfully arrested including two men named Mothiram and Shethu from Bombay City, who arrived there for a marriage ceremony, being related to the gang in question. Their names would show that they styled themselves after the Mahratta country wherein they had settled. Most of the members bore blood relationship to each other. The headman was one Bhima. A cousin of his has a permanent pucka-built house at Narwad in the State. This gang under Bhima is an erratic one with headquarters near Ahmadnagar. Bhima's two daughters are employed ostensibly in a mill in Bombay.

Disposal of property in Native States.

56. The stolen property connected with the case was sold to a Dhangar in Bowchee, a village in Miraj, a Native State again. He in turn disposed of the property in the several Native States of Sangli, Miraj and Kholapur avoiding the British dominions. About 750 Rupees worth of property was recovered in all those places and all the nine were charged and placed before the First-class Magistrate of the Belgaum. During the preliminary enquiry, the accused had to be taken before the Magistrate on tour on the morning of 24th October, 1904.

Their assault and escape.

On their march, when they were escorted by a Head Constable and five Constables, they broke their

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chains, assaulted the Police and began to take to their heels. The Police who were all armed opened fire against the runaways. The headman Bhima was killed on the spot, a second, Mothiram of Bombay, who had seven previous convictions in Bombay, Ahmadnagar and other places was wounded to such an extent that he died in Belgaum hospital the third day. Three others who were disabled and a fourth, an elderly man of Bombay, were re-arrested and placed before the Magistrate. They have all been sentenced to long terms of imprisonment. These men are shown in the illustration.

57. A day previous to this crime, this very gang committed a dacoity off Dundee in Kholapur State, about 14 miles from there. A portion of the stolen property of that case also was recovered.

58. The women of this gang deposed that their parents belonged to the Bellary District and that they were mere basket-makers. I gave only a brief resumé of these two cases to show among other things that these budmashes prefer living in small Native States where surveillance is rather slack, that there is intimacy between the gangs of the Madras and Bombay Presidencies, that the men mostly live in the jungles where the women go and join them at nights, sending their meal there during the day, and that where possible they do not omit to take advantage of the inadvertance of their Police escort, even at the risk of their lives.

Salem Korawars in Trichinopoly.

59. In the Administration Report of 1895, the Superintendent of Police, Trichinopoly, complained that the Korawars of Atur in the Salem District made periodical raids into his, and that they should be most carefully watched.

Extension of Jathipalli Korawars in the South.

60. The Jathipalli Korawars again who are only an offshoot of this tribe and who abound in South Arcot and Tanjore, have been gradually spreading into Trichinopoly, Madura, Tinnevelly and Travancore, indulging in burglaries and dacoities of a daring character. The Tinnevelly Superin-

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tendent had to issue a special circular last year to keep all his Inspectors on guard against their depredations.

Korawars joining other criminals.

61. Turning again to the permanent gangs it is observed from their *modus operandi* that members of two or three gangs related to each other, often meet at a certain spot, usually at a toddy shop, to conspire together and plan a crime. Sometimes they even travel by rail to places far away from their place of business and after the commission of a crime, they usually return with the booty by road and through jungles to their homes. Sometimes the members of these permanent and wandering gangs join the criminal tribes of other castes, as observed in a recent case that occurred at Jagarlamudi in Bapatla Taluq of the Guntur District in October 1901; in which property worth upwards of a lakh of rupees was stolen in a torch light dacoity. In this case the criminal tribe of Peddeti Gollas of Hyderabad territory and the Woddars of the same district joined the Korawars, and after successfully carrying away the property retired unmolested to the range of hills called Kondavedu hills, covered with a thick forest that extended into Hyderabad territory. Similarly the Kaikaries of Bombay join the Ramoosees or Bedars and Kolhaties in such heavy crime.

Association with the villagers.

62. Very often these Korawars commingle with the local ryots, moving with them and living with them. They also lend money to them sometimes passing themselves as richer than they. They spend more liberally in eating and drinking to induce bad women of the higher orders to associate with them and these are often enticed away subsequently into their community. In a few villages in North Arcot, they are received into the houses of Kapus and Kammas, whose women are in carnal intimacy with them, and are treated with sumptuous meals. They are harboured for months together when suspected in heavy crimes. An instance of this was related to me by Mr. C. H. Travers, the then Superintendent of Police of the District. In that instance the women

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of a rich Village Munsiff's family were said to have been in close touch with the leaders of a Korawa gang, so much so that, when some of the gang were arrested in a dacoity case, the Village Munsiff and his women helped them in various ways. It is such associations that help them often in disguising themselves as ryot classes of Kapus, Kammas and Balijas to avoid recognition while travelling by railways. In July 1905 a Kamma man of pretty good circumstances organized two heavy burglaries with Korwars in Bezvada Taluq of the Kistna District.

Theft of Fowls.

63. When a gang halts at a certain town or village the women and the youngsters busy themselves in stealing fowls which they do in quite an easy way. When they espy any fowls at a hut, they throw a few grains at them and entice them away from there by sprinkling the grains as they go along receding from the hut all the time and the moment they are well out of sight, they catch the fowls, twist their necks to prevent their making a noise and wrap them up in their cloths.

Cattle and Sheep thefts.

64. The men in their turn will not miss any opportunity that may present itself to drive away stray cattle to far-off places, often to a distance of 100 miles and more, where they can sell them with impunity. When any such successful theft is effected, the remaining portion of the gang gradually changes its encampment generally in the *opposite* direction, to divert the suspicion of the villagers and set them on a false scent. Some of these are specialists so to say in stealing sheep in broad daylight. When they find a flock grazing in shrubby jungles or in mountainous places, a Korawa quietly goes and catches a sheep grazing at a bush or a block of stone unobserved by the shepherd, and immediately draws out the tongue of the animal and nails a thorn of the date tree or of some other kind into it to prevent it from bleating, and then ties the legs with a rope and goes away empty handed like any ordinary traveller, leaving the animal there. The poor creature lies down there till the evening not

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being able to accompany the other sheep which go along grazing from place to place. The shepherd who watches the general movement of the flock from some distance does not notice the absence of this particular animal till perhaps the next morning when he usually counts. Meanwhile the delinquent quietly goes to the spot in the night, cuts the animal up at his leisure and walks away with the meat and the skin. Recently in the Kistna District, a Korawan was convicted five times, all for such thefts.

Burglaries.

65. As I have already mentioned, the Korawa women study the topography of some selected houses when they gain admission into them on the pretext of selling forest produce or of soothsaying. The head of the gang verifies the information given by the woman and deputes as many men as he considers sufficient for the offence. Equipped with sticks, sickles and implements of house-breaking—generally pointed iron or steel rods of different sizes from 12 to 24 inches long, sometimes with a wooden handle,—the party starts and approaches the spotted house after 11 P.M. They generally try to effect an entrance either through a wall in level with the ground, or below the doorsill as circumstances permit. Two or three men are engaged at this and the rest are posted all around to give the alarm on the approach of any danger. If they succeed in their attempt, and the way is all clear, the property is brought out and handed over to their comrades outside, who remove it to a pre-arranged place at some distance from the village till all the party meet there. They then carry away the property with them as fast as they can and burying it before morning at a convenient place off their encampment, quietly get into their huts with any ready cash available from the booty. When they find no suspicion falling on them for some days, they divide it among themselves, and bury each man's share in his own convenient spot. Sometimes when they remain unsuspected for a long time, they bury the jewels, each in his own hut close to the central pole at about a yard's depth, or in the mud-wall around. If

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surprised in the act of committing an offence and surrounded, they show fight—using their sticks and arms freely and make an effort to escape. In such cases the burglaries contemplated assume the character of dacoities. If unfortunately anyone is caught, he will never, even under the worst type of torture, expose his accomplices. If caught red-handed with property, he may confess perhaps, but not till then.

Highway robberies.

66. When encamped at a respectable distance from weekly fairs or festivals, they wait at a certain nullah or bushy place at dusk and rob the women or men, who go singly or in small parties, of their jewels, cloths and even provisions which they may happen to wear or carry. This they do generally at a long distance from any villages. In a few cases the women were reported to have been ravished by them. In a few other cases the victims, after being robbed, were tied up to trees closely in jungles and blindfolded with cloths. In one case I was informed that one of such victims had been untied while they left the scene, so that he might untie the rest at leisure. This at least may be considered rather humane of such inhuman wretches. Before any complaint is made to a village patel or Police Officer, they would be miles away from the scene of the offence often committing a series of such offences on their way in the course of one evening. They do not care to tarry and see if the victims have any valuable property about them. Any trifling thing such as a vessel, a cloth, a bundle of rice, whether boiled or raw, or a few pice would suffice for the moment.

67. Again when the gang encamps at a distance from a road where there is good traffic of carts and travellers, they wait at some nullah or tope close to the road, and when one, two or even three bandies go together, they attack them first by throwing stones at the bullocks and on the carts. In this their object is two-fold. One is to see whether the travellers carry any fire arms with them and the second is to divert the bullocks into the fields or jungles, where they can conveniently stop the carts and rummage them after robbing

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the people. They first beat with clubs one or two persons, either bandymen or passengers, to alarm the rest and cause confusion. They then make the victims sit at a certain spot around or on one side of the cart and examine each man as to what property he has on his person and order him to give up the keys or open the box himself. They then rummage all the *saman*. If, in the meanwhile, any of them should try to escape, he is sure to receive injuries. One or two of the gang will stand *sentry* over each man till the whole baggage is examined by the leaders. The poor victims who are obliged to prostrate themselves at their feet will not be spared at times even the cloths on their persons. Such robberies are often attended with murders, but, in generality, Korawars do not voluntarily commit murders for such robberies as do the Thugs, but they occur in the general assault in the commencement, by the injuries caused in delicate parts, or when there is opposition from the victims or bandymen. After thus accomplishing their cruel mission, they carry away the property to a jungle at some distance where they all join and after examining the whole of the stolen property, they separate the jewels and valuable cloths and run away with them throwing away cloths and articles of paltry value at spots and paths quite different from the one leading to their own encampment. This they do to mislead the detective or any officer who might come there to investigate the case.

68. Very often the members of the gang who move about the villages and toddy shops during day-time, also frequent the cart-stands if there happen to be any, to see if any marriage or other party propose to travel by road or cart track to any village in the night. A gang starts in detachments and these follow the cart or carts unobserved up to a certain convenient spot where they rob them, as described in the foregoing paras.

69. A piece of advice from an officer of my experience and service to the travelling public will not fail to be useful. When you are attacked with stones at the very onset,

Advice to the travelling public.



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remove all the jewels from the persons of yourself, your females and children as quickly as possible and throw them out of the carriage at some distance, spotting the place. If the jewels are small ones, you can throw them in the straw of the cart. But you must quietly hand over the ready cash to the robbers, as if that were all you had so that you may escape torture. If you have currency notes quietly thrust them into the matting of the cart and you will save as much as possible.

70. When I was in charge of Gooty division where highway dacoity was rife, the Taluq Sheristadar of Gooty and some merchants of the same place saved a good deal of property by thus doing. In the morning the property was found all around the scene of offence in large quantities, which they would have lost if left on their persons or in their boxes.

House dacoities.

71. House dacoities are more frequently committed in villages all over the Madras and Bombay Presidencies now-a-days. Their *modus operandi* is more or less the same as it was half a century ago. I have therefore thought it necessary to quote a confession made by Dhasa, a leader of Kaikaries in 1852, in which he confesses to have committed 27 such dacoities and 3 burglaries with his gang, besides being paid his share as the leader of the gang in many others though he did not take active part in them. His statement runs thus :—

*Modus operandi.*

"Our custom is as follows :—First, we have the united gangs of two or three leaders in each particular tract of country, in which they subsist on the proceeds of dacoity, and such tracts the gang of any other leader cannot, according to our rules, visit for the purpose of dacoity, nor can the leaders told off as above to any one district go into that belonging to other leaders, except they first intimate their desire to do so to the latter and consent to join their men with theirs in the enterprise. Should any jemadar, without first giving the above information, go into the tract belonging to another leader, and with his gang commit a dacoity therein, he is set upon

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by the gang belonging to that tract and a fight generally takes place between the two gangs, and he is driven away, but should any jemadar at any time take his gang away, and leave the district which has been allotted to him, then any other gang can of course visit that country, and commit dacoities in it. Again, when alighted at any spot, and it is desired to undertake an affair, the leader intimates to the gang that he will go in a certain direction for information as to where to commit a dacoity, and he names a certain number of days within which the gang is to appear at some place fixed upon by him, where he will meet them; we call that place "Tippun" (rendezvous). The Jemadar then goes off accordingly with two or three sharp men of the gang accompanied also by two or three women and under pretence of being in search of work as basket-makers, or of wishing to be employed to reset and mend "Chekkies" (mill-stones), they manage to get the necessary information as to the premises of some Sahoocar, or other affluent person; for our women, being admitted in the above capacity into the houses where they may be required, obtain every opportunity for observing who and what females or children of the house have ornaments on their persons, and all about the different places into which they may have gone. "The Jemadar and his two or three men also reconnoitre the several premises, taking notes as to the entrances into them; what lanes lead up to them, from what direction to approach them, what streets to guard, and what doors to burst open; or whether to have to climb up to any terrace, and thus gain access into the place, where to post the different look-outs, what approaches to shut up with thorns, and where thorns may be readily obtained from. Having satisfied himself as to all these points, the Jemadar returns with his scouts to the rendezvous or "Tippun" as above, by which time the main body of the gang has generally already arrived there: he then imparts to everyone all that he has ascertained and arranged and then, having considered over everything, one of the places he has visited as above is finally fixed upon where to undertake the enterprise. After this, the whole gang

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advances two or three stages and then we offer sacrifice to our god by slaying and feasting upon one or two goats or sheep, and drinking liquor; but if the village in which the house to be attacked happens to be near the "Tippun," then the ceremony of the sacrifice and worship is performed then and there. After this, all advance; and, at length, when about four or five koss distant from the preconcerted place, all women and children are placed at some favourable spot in the jungle country thereabouts and after taking a meal, the men of the gang sally forth about nightfall and at about 10 or 11 o'clock in the night arrive and collect outside of the village in which is the appointed house.

"The leader then goes into the village to see whether the inmates of the house are asleep or not, at what spots the village guards may be, etc.; having satisfied himself as to all these points, he returns to the gang, and then accompanied by the whole, he first has two or three loads of thorns taken from the hedges, generally outside of the village, and proceeds to the house. Arrived there, he places the thorns across the lanes that are to be closed and appoints men to guard the different approaches, and also the doors of the premises: and with the rest of the gang he makes the attack. At the door the torch is lighted, and then the door is either burst open or one of the gang is assisted up to the terrace from which to descend by some window or other into the house, and to open the door from within for the others to enter by; or as sometimes, all get up to the top of the house by a ladder, and leap into it. Having effected an entrance, the robbery is committed, and the booty brought out: the gang is then mustered and the whole make off in a body. Should the village people, at any time assault us, we oppose them in a body with clubs, stones and slings: should they retreat, we get the opportunity to escape without further ado, but if anyone of us should happen to get wounded and be seized, we do our best to rescue him, in which we generally succeed. If, by chance, the village people are too strong for us, we are forced to leave him and make off.

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"Our weapons are clubs, stones and slings,—sometimes we take a sword or two. The Kaikaries in the Poona Zillah generally do not use any swords in their affairs, but those visiting the Sholapoor and Nizam's districts do so. After having escaped from the village, the leader halts and collects his men about a koss or one-and-a-half koss from the place, and he then searches the persons of the gang, and takes possession of every article of plunder he may find upon them, all of which he ties up in a bundle, and keeps in his charge. We then repair to where our families have been placed, and picking them up, we travel on the whole of the remainder of the night. Should our haunt happen to be a long distance off, we travel leisurely to it, only after the first two or three days. At night we always bury the plunder, so that should anybody be in pursuit of us we may not be caught during the night time unawares with the plunder in our possession. In this manner we return to our old encampment, where, as I have stated, we may in the first place have alighted and fixed our abode (for the season). After about ten or twelve days we share the booty. Sometimes we get hold of some Sonar or Shroff, and dispose of the whole of the booty to him, and divide among us the money we may have got from him for the same: sometimes we just share the plunder itself among us. This is the scale of distribution: the jemadar gets two-and-a-half shares, each sepoy one share, every widow and each lad half-a-share; every superannuated or infirm dacoit of the gang also gets one share.

"We take an axe for the purpose of breaking open doors and trunks, and it is entrusted to some strong and powerful member of the gang, who must never throw it down or leave it behind; if we find a door very strong, resisting the blows of one man, another seizes the axe from him and relieves him, and so on till the work is done. Of torches we take as the occasion may demand, as many even as four if necessary; if the place to be attacked is not of much importance, two torches suffice; but if the premises are extensive, we will take three or four

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with us ; we have no particular rule as to who should be the torch-bearers, as the office is undertaken of choice by anyone.

"Generally we obtain the necessary information through our own means, but sometimes we will make enquiries as to a place of some one of the inhabitants with whom we may happen to be very intimate : on such occasions we always agree to give our informant a share in the booty we may obtain, and we always do so should we undertake any affair upon intelligence obtained in this manner ; but, on the whole, we do not let anybody into our confidence but now and then, and we will never commit any robbery at the instigation of any party who may desire to hire us for the purpose, out of revenge or such motives,—because our object is simply to obtain money and plunder, without reference to any feelings against the parties we may rob and we are not therefore in the habit of killing people when engaged in any affair ; moreover, we never undertake any outrage except we are satisfied as to our chances from personal observation and inspection of the premises, and we strive our utmost to keep our own counsel."

Searches.

72. On certain occasions I successfully recovered property from a Korawa camp by surrounding their huts at the cock-crow early in the morning, with a number of Constables advancing from all directions, not minding the barking of the dogs which these Korawars invariably maintain to keep all strangers at bay. No man, woman or child should be allowed to leave the huts till daybreak under any circumstances. They should be made to sit separately in a line, some of the Constables being posted all round the camp to prevent any ingress or egress. If they are allowed to move about, the stolen property will disappear in various ways. If any woman should trouble a Police officer, to be allowed to go out for answering the calls of nature, close observation of her person and movements will not fail to be useful. In one case I allowed an old woman to go near a hillock, where she squatted but I noticed that she dug out some earth in front of her. On examining

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the spot, I found a small gunny bag buried with rupees and silver bangles in it. As I have already said, it is the property connected with the old and time-lapsed cases that is often found in the huts, pack saddles, cowdung heaps, fireplaces, easing places, and under the pegs of their cattle. When identifiable stolen property is traced directly to a Korawa hut or *saman*, he makes a clean breast of the whole affair connected with the case in the heat of the moment before a Police officer, probably to avoid any torture, but before a Magistrate, there will never be a straight confession unless there is a pre-arrangement among the gang as to the particular member that should undergo incarceration for that particular crime, they taking care to come to some arrangement almost simultaneously with the detection of property. When any member is thus selected, he will confess the crime without exposing the others concerned. The wife of the man so selected to undergo punishment gets a share for her maintenance till the return of her husband, the second share to be divided among the accomplices and the third set apart to meet the expenses, including the fees of a Vakil, etc., that may have to be incurred by the head of the gang. When there is no such expenditure, the headman gets this share.

Disposal of stolen property.

73. In these days of keen competition in every walk of life to earn money, receivers have been increasing in every part of the country, for a receiver enriches himself sooner by dealing in stolen property than by any honest means. These Korawars have many ways of disposing of their stolen property. The Kaikaries of Dharwar, Bijapur, Bellary and Kurnool which touch the Lingsugur district of the Nizam's Dominions, lately disposed of some stolen property openly in weekly fairs, on the plea that owing to plague they left their country, having lost women and children in it: and that therefore they have been selling away the jewels of their families, having no more use for them.

Receivers.

74. Each gang has its special receivers in villages, in men and women, who harbour them, as has already been shown, and who dispose

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of the property at leisure advancing money if any is required beforehand. With very rare exceptions, every arrack and toddy seller is their customer in this business. After every successful attempt at crime, a Korawan cannot refrain from drink, in which he generally indulges in excess with his women. It is often on such occasions that clues to the tracing up of crimes committed by them are obtained. Very rarely they quarrel over their division of the booty in public. Every difference among them is squared up with a pot of toddy before an assemblage of the gang at a toddy shop when the beverage freely circulating, the *pros* and *cons* of their differences are discussed without any restraint whatever. It is then that the detectives have every facility to know about them and to hook them to their crimes if they should only watch them in disguise at the time. A Tamil-knowing officer will be more useful than others, to understand their language.

A few words in their favour.

75. Though I have been in the foregoing pages most unrelentingly depicting their hereditary bad habits and customs and their thieving propensities, I may sum up here, in extenuation of them that they were from their origin an innocent class of temple servnats or servants of gods who subsequently followed the very useful and lucrative profession of helping the people by the distribution of the earth's produce to places where it was badly wanted. But from these innocent and honourable professions, they have been gradually ousted by more intelligent and speculative citizens and foreigners. Having been leading a wandering life by virtue of their profession, they did not possess any houses or lands anywhere to settle in. They had to sell away their cattle gradually having no more use for them and were eventually forced to live on the property of others to appease their hunger, nor could they get any regular work in villages. Thus they became an indolent class addicted to crime. According to Havelock Ellis in his work on "The Criminal" in the contemporary science series, "The criminal everywhere is

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incapable of prolonged and sustained exertion; an amount of regular work which would utterly exhaust the most vigorous and rebellious would be easily accomplished by an ordinary workman. He is essentially idle; the whole art of crime lies in the endeavour to avoid the necessity of labour. This constitutional laziness is therefore one of the chief organic bases of crime. Make idleness impossible and you have done much to make the criminal impossible. It is not without reason that French criminals call themselves *Pegres* (from Pigritia), the idle. Lemaire, a notorious French criminal of the beginning of the last century, was speaking for all his class when he said to his judges: "I have always been lazy; it is a shame, I admit, but I am not adapted for work; to work one needs make an effort, and I am incapable of it; I only have energy for evil; if one must work I do not care about life; I would rather be condemned to death."

The constitutional laziness of a criminal.

"While he is essentially lazy, and exhibits this even in his general neglect of personal cleanliness (though sometimes dressed outwardly as an ordinary man of the world), the criminal is capable of moments of violent activity. He cannot, indeed, live without them; they are the chief events of his spiritual life.

76. "The criminal craves for some powerful stimulus, excitement, uproar, to lift him out of his habitual inertia. That is why the love of alcohol is in all countries so strong among criminals. The man who is organised as we have seen the criminal to be, must have some powerful stimulant to take him out of himself, to give him a joy which is otherwise beyond his grasp, and alcohol is the stimulant which comes easiest to hand. When, as frequently happens, he is the child of alcoholic parents, the craving for drink soon obtains morbid intensity. Crime and drink are intimately bound together, although we must beware of too unreservedly setting down drink as the cause of crime. Both crime and drink

Criminal craves for stimulants.

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are the morbid manifestations of organic defects which for the most part precede birth."

77. I then come to their criminal philosophy referred to in the same book.

Philosophy of a criminal.

"An Italian criminal wrote in a book of 'Moral Maxims' by Tommaseo: 'When you have read this book, become a priest or a master; if not it will be of no use to you. There are fine maxims in this book, but maxims are no good in this world, where the god of gold reigns alone. He who has money is brave and virtuous; all the maxims of Tommaseo are of no use to him who has none; he will still be treated with contempt.' A Milanese thief said to Lombroso: 'I do not rob; I merely take from the rich their superfluities: and, besides, do not advocates and merchants rob? Why accuse me rather than them?' "Knowing," wrote the murderer Raynal, "that three-fourths of the social virtues are cowardly vices, I thought that an open assault on a rich man would be less ignoble than the cautious combinations of fraud."

"Another Italian thief said that there were two kinds of justice in the world: natural justice, that which he himself practised when he shared the proceeds of his thefts with the poor; and artificial justice, that which is protected by social laws. The criminal is firmly convinced that his imprisonment is a sign that the country is going to the dogs. A prison inscription quoted by Lombroso runs: "I am imprisoned for stealing half-a-dozen eggs; Ministers who rob millions every day are honoured. Poor Italy!" "We are necessary," a brigand chief said proudly to his judges; "God has sent us on the earth to punish the avaricious and the rich. We are a kind of divine scourge. And for the rest, without us what would you judges do?"

"Among the criminal songs still found in Sardinia there is one (quoted by Lombroso from Bouillier's *Les Dialectes et les Chants de la Sardaigne*) that may be quoted here. "Tell me," asks Achea of the priest, "if I have nothing

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to eat, and if I find wherewith to appease my hunger may I take the goods of another ?" "Believe me, if you have nothing to eat, and you meet with something, you would be a fool not to take it." "That is a good counsel, but here is a difficulty : what I have taken in this way, ought I to return it ?" "No. The observance of the law would subject you to a fast too severe ; you are a great fool if you do not understand that in the face of necessity all things belong to all." That is the morality of a lawless and primitive society, but it has points of contact with some of the latest and highest developments of social morality. Tolstoi would justify it ; as, to a certain extent, a respected Archbishop has justified it."

Steps necessary to better their condition.

78. They thus justify themselves in depriving others of their property because they feel the want of it often for their bare existence, and it is but meet that steps are taken to ameliorate their condition by helping them with suitable means to enable them to lead an honest life, instead of worrying them by Police officers escorting them from place to place in the name of "surveillance of the gangs" and thus putting them to greater misery, not allowing them even the little liberty that any workman enjoys.

Mr. P. B. Thomas on Criminal gangs.

79. Mr. P. B. Thomas, the District Superintendent of Police, Kolar Gold Fields, in his valuable paper on Criminal gangs, read at the Police Conference held in the month of September, 1904, puts in lucidly that there remains the question of the surveillance of this class, and this is a very thorny subject indeed. There are two notes on the subject, published in the *Madras Police Gazette*, dated 14th March, 1896, in order No. 13 by Colonels Porteous and Rolland, who were universally known as Police officers of exceptional ability and experience, and these notes contain practically the last word that can be said on the subject, as follow :—

"**Escorting Criminal Gangs.**—A Superintendent refers the question whether *escorting* gangs of supposed criminals as

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distinguished from merely watching gangs is permissible. The point is that in no case should the law be broken while, at the same time, every possible effort should be made to maintain a record of the movements of all persons *bonâ-fide* suspected of crime. It is very rarely the case that it is advisable to actually detach one or more constables to *escort* or accompany a gang. Such cases occur occasionally, and the Inspector-General is not prepared to make a hard and fast rule that no gang is ever to be escorted. The following two orders of Colonel Porteous and Colonel Rolland appear to the Inspector-General to express very suitably the principles which should guide Superintendents in the matter, and they are republished for general information.

Remarks of Col. C. A. Porteous, Deputy Inspector-General of Police, Northern Range, on letter No. 421, dated 6th June, 1884, from the Superintendent of Police, Kistna District.

"I. For the prevention of crime it is no doubt an admirable plan to watch the movements of wandering gangs by whom many of our graver crimes are committed, but this watching must be much more carefully, judicially and expertly performed than is now done. If there are Policemen about them, wandering gangs cannot help occasionally seeing them, but the Policemen should not be everlastingly in sight. These gangs should feel that they are being watched by intelligent Policemen, of whose whereabouts they are not always aware and who turn up at unexpected times and places, rather than by an ignorant "Bobby" in uniform always in view. It must be remembered that if a person (Policeman or other) is always in sight, he is more easily eluded or avoided than a man whose whereabouts is not always exactly known.

II. Once the numbers, names and description of different members of wandering gangs have been taken, they should never again be interfered with, un-

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less when committing or about to commit or they have committed crime. It must be borne in mind that descriptions are important; for although members of wandering gangs occasionally disguise their appearance, their identity can generally be proved. But names are often of very little use as they are so continually being changed. I have known a Yanady under half a dozen different names, not one of which was his proper name. It would be as well if the man or men appointed to watch a gang were others than those who took their names, description, etc.

III. The duty of watching gangs is a very difficult one and requires peculiar talent and intelligence above that of the ordinary constable. The very best and most intelligent men of a division should be appointed to this duty, they should also be men with thorough local knowledge. One man or even two men cannot perform this duty thoroughly by themselves. They must work hand in glove with all the Munsifs and Village Police of the surrounding country, having their assistance, obtaining information from them as to the movements of gangs or presence of individual members in the villages, etc.

I repeat that wandering gangs must be made to feel that they are being properly watched and that when least expected a Policeman may be down on them, and not always to see a Policeman in front of them.

IV. The usual plan now for a Policeman is to have a paka among those of the gang or at one side; he considers the gang in his charge. If he sees a man going anywhere (going to cut wood, etc.), he calls out "where are you going"? "You have no business to leave without my permission." The men are constantly bullied and not even allowed to gain an honest livelihood; or the still more

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common practice is for a constable to get a comfortable berth in an adjoining village and only to turn up somewhere near the gang when the Inspector or Head Constable is expected. The constable, as a rule, sleeps in the village at night and does not go with two or three talaries round the wandering gang's camp.

V. I say again the best men must be used, and they must, to a certain extent, be trusted and held responsible for full information regarding the movements of the gang. The record of names, description, etc., should, as a rule, be undertaken by the Head Constable. The fullest information should be obtained of every gang, where it has come from and where going, and the Police of adjoining stations should be freely communicated with: nothing but all minds working together and all stations, divisions, districts, doing their best will ensure success in this matter; what more can I say? It is easy to give orders, the difficulty is in having them carried out."

Remarks of Col. A. T. Rolland, Acting Deputy Inspector-General of Police, Central Range, dated 28th June, 1884:—

"It is as Colonel Porteous says, a very difficult matter to have wandering gangs thoroughly, efficiently and intelligently watched. The Inspector should be able to select men fitted for this duty or have them at all his stations: he should enlist the sympathies and aid of all Village Magistrates and Village Police to bring in information sharp of arrival of wandering gangs; then our men can be put on. They should be specially instructed that they are in no way to interfere with the movements of the gang, who are at perfect liberty to go where they like, as long as they don't commit crime; when a gang finds that they are being watched they will frequently break up one or two at a time and meet elsewhere; frequently the young and able-bodied members of a gang will keep entirely apart from the old men, women and children; this

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is when they are committing crime; probably in another district they all meet afterwards.

The danger in interfering with the movements of these people is that the Policeman is liable to prosecution; a case of this nature did occur in Tanjore and the Head Constable was tried at Sessions and got off only "by the skin of his teeth."

The time to look up a gang is during the night; during the dark nights, the chances are that some of them will be found to be absent: the constable should then send off word to all surrounding Station House Officers, and those Station House Officers should at once communicate the occurrence of crime to the constable with the gang, who would naturally then be on the alert, and both he and the Station House Officers [illegible] work together, as well as Village Magistrates and Village Police. [illegible]ost in

It is a very difficult matter to lay down hard and fast rules: the one thing to remember is that one must not interfere with the liberty of the subject and to keep within the law."

80. Mr. Thomas adds that the *escorting* of suspected gangs is considered *illegal* and yet it is believed a gang cannot be kept under efficient supervision without being escorted. There lies the rule. It seems almost impossible to watch a gang properly and still keep within the law. In the face of such a situation, no definite rules can be laid down and success depends entirely on the individual energy and tact of the local Police officers.

81. I venture to think, however, that this situation will not appear so bad, if we don't lose sight of the fact that when a gang has once been proved in a court of law to be Criminal, by the convicting of some or all its members, the Police are legally entitled to employ as many methods of dealing with it as they find practicable, though they may be set down as illegal in the absence of any such proof. The whole trend of our work should be in this direction and we are assisted in

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it by the present rapid development of the country. In process of time the wandering criminal tribes with their cattle and camps and predatory habits must disappear before the spread of population and the cultivation of waste areas or else they must accept the altered conditions and settle down locally.

82. The opinion of Sir P. N. Krishnamurti, the present Dewan of Mysore on the subject will not fail to be useful to the Police all over. He says :—

Sir P. N. Krishnamurti's advice to Police.

"The chief work to be done with regard to gangs is the ascertaining of the characters of the members of each gang by the Police. Both the Regular and the Village Police should be on the alert and find out if any gang is evading surveillance and are encamped or hiding in [illegible] of jungles. Beat constables should beat all jungle paths, visit isolated places affording shelter to criminals and get all the information they can from boys grazing sheep or tending cattle in jungles and also from the parties whom they meet.

"Members of all criminal classes who are habituals know what the Police are doing and whether they are on the alert or not. Every manœuvre of the Police is secretly and yet keenly watched by them and they know just when they could enter a place for the commission of crime and get away with little chance of being caught. For the police to combat against such characters successfully they should have continued resources of information at command, an effectual check over the paths used for purposes of entry ; be sure that the watch and ward of towns and villages are always maintained, the night watching being indispensable and that no isolated shelter is resorted to."

83. In my opinion the present loose sort of registering the gangs on the bare assertions of inexperienced Station House Officers and the surveillance of them by constables who often look to the heads of gangs for their food and drink and who

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are in fact at their mercy when in jungles can never be perfect. Some other system of localizing them and making them settle permanently as harmless villagers with some honest means of living must be sought.

84. Mr. L. Kristnarao, a Superintendent of Police in the Mysore Province in his very lucid memorandum on "the surveillance of Criminal gangs" seems to concur with my views put forth briefly in my evidence before the Police committee and the commission, of localizing and settling them under some river projects which are being organized all over India, under the liberal grant of funds by Lord Curzon, to whom are due the thanks of the ryot population. Mr. Kristnarao says "I am not to be understood as advocating the sudden withdrawal of existing restrictions under which their movements and conduct are placed; for such a course, instead of turning them into honest ways of living, would convert them into desperate characters in the struggle that will ensue for existence. All I wish to suggest is that if they need restraints and curbs to regulate their wants and inclinations as well as to control their actions and behaviours, they no less need the means of earning an honest livelihood for which both the training and the incentive are at present lacking. Any scheme therefore that has for its aim the regeneration of the Criminal classes must not, while adhering strictly to the code of wholesome restraints, omit to provide all that is necessary to foster and develop, under such conditions, the character and the habit essential to produce reforming effects.

Mr. L. Krishnarao's suggestion.

85. No cut and dry scheme that would satisfy all conditions can be confidently recommended without a careful consideration of the ways and means by which the desired reform might be effected. The best mode of dealing with the Criminal classes is to apply the provisions of the Criminal Tribes Act XXVII of 1871. This act provides for the "registration, surveillance and control of certain criminal

Criminal tribes Act XXVII in the Panjab and United Provinces.



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tribes" and is in force in the Panjab and the United Provinces of Agra and Oudh. Subsidiary rules were framed by the Panjab Government and issued under Notification No. 530, dated the 11th February, 1873. The rules may be so framed as to include all members of the criminal classes wherever residing to be proclaimed and registered as such under the Act."

Failure to settle thieves in N. Arcot and Mysore.

86. But it must be remembered that the mere grant of waste lands is not enough. Some advances will have to be made to them at the onset and then they must be kept under proper discipline and check till they get accustomed to village life and and the lives of husbandry, as their brethren, the Mussalman Korawars in Tinnevelly. Attempts to settle these erratic classes agriculturally, failed through want of training, resources, discipline and check in a few cases tried in two of the taluqs of North Arcot and in three taluqs of Mysore. Each family should be given some wet lands under the new projects and they must be trained in agricultural work for one or two years, providing them with implements of husbandry and with advances commensurate with the wants of each family. Such settlements have to be supervised by officers vigilantly till they taste the fruits of cultivation and enjoy their now comparatively sedentary life.

Success and failure in settlement of Doms in Bengal.

87. I will now give an instance of an agricultural settlement of the kind, which though attended with first-rate success in the beginning, became gradually abortive through a little laxity in the discipline and check maintained. You know in Bengal there is a criminal tribe called the Doms, otherwise known as Maghaya Doms, who form its pest as it were. These Doms are supposed to have been inhabiting originally the tract of country lying at the foot of the Himalayas, and extending from the river Rohini on the west to the river Bagmatti on the east, from which they must have migrated into Bengal. The tribe was dealt with by Mr. G. R. Clarke

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of the Indian Civil Service in a pamphlet called "The Outcastes." In it he says, "the idea of agricultural settlements was first conceived in 1883 by Mr. Henry, the present chief of the London Police, at that time Collector of Champaran. The object of these settlements was to induce the Doms to abandon their vagrant habits and to settle down as cultivators on grants of land, which were to be given to them. The conditions of such settlements, according to Mr. Henry, were that they should be self-supporting; that strict discipline should be maintained and a full tale of labour exacted. For the first few years the scheme was attended with some measure of success. The founder inspired his subordinates with his own extraordinary enthusiasm and personally superintended the arrangements. The various gangs of Doms were collected, houses were built for them, and each family was allotted a certain amount of land. A picked officer was put in charge of each settlement, and his duty was to see that his charges devoted their energies to agriculture and did not abandon their holdings. The land was given rent-free and every family enjoyed the fruits of its own labour. Employment as peons and chowkidars was sought for men who did not fancy agriculture as a pursuit. It was hoped that by these measures, the rising generation of Doms would forget their thieving propensities and would gradually settle down to earn an honest livelihood."

88. "In the beginning very strict discipline was maintained, and the officer in charge of a settlement had the power of using the lash—a power which in most cases he availed himself of with discretion. When these officers were men of the proper stamp, considerable success was attained, and to show what good work was done, I quote from the report of Mr. Worsley, Collector of Champaran, in 1887 :—

Final success in a few settlements.

"In the Bargaon and Fattehpore Settlements, the Doms may be said to have thoroughly taken to agricultural pursuits and to be living honestly and happily. Some have be-

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come quite substantial cultivators, owning bullocks, pigs and fowls. The children are being educated in Patasalas which have been established at the settlements, and a feeling of self-respect is growing up among the members of both communities.

89. "This report by a man who was thoroughly acquainted with the state of affairs is enough to make any Government congratulate itself. Unfortunately in the next few years matters did not go so well. The first step downwards was a relaxation of discipline caused by the visit of a sensitive Lieutenant-Governor, who characterised the use of a lash as a blot on the administration and forbade its infliction once and for all. There was no reason to believe that this form of punishment had been abused in any way, and it certainly was the easiest and most effective means of keeping the Doms in order. After this denunciation from headquarters, the enthusiasm and interest of the district officers seem to have somewhat abated, and finally the fatal want of continuity in administration, which renders so many schemes in India abortive, helped to wreck the prospects, such as they were, of the Dom reformation. The management of the settlements fell into bad hands. It was not regarded as either honorable or remunerative employment; in consequence, the old energy disappeared, the supervision exercised was nearly perfunctory and a system of *Laissez-faire* was generally adopted."

Failure owing to bad management.

90. Of course I am not to be understood to mean that I advocate the use of the lash in the case of the Korawars; nor do they seem to be so very incorrigible as to need it. The infliction of the lash may perhaps be considered inhuman and so not be approved of by some officers. But there are milder forms of check prescribed by the Criminal Tribes Act XXVII of 1871 or the Bombay Regulation XII of 1827, which may be introduced where necessary with slight modifications in Madras.

Introduction of Act XXVII of 1871 or Bombay Regulation XII of 1827 necessary.

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91. Mr. C. M. Mullaly, I.C.S., a District Magistrate states that "as there is no provision of law authorizing the Police to keep habitual criminals under surveillance so as to control and watch over their movements, the efficacy and legality of this action is questionable. The Superintendent advocates the extension of the Criminal Tribes Act to these districts (Ceded districts). If such surveillance is necessary, it should be rendered legal by some such enactment as the Criminal Tribes Act."

Suggestion of Mr. C. M. Mullaly, I.C.S.

92. No doubt a few Police officers did not consider the introduction of enactments necessary as the tribes could gradually be brought round by the application of the preventive sections of the Criminal Procedure Code. When the District Magistrate of Kistna recommended the introduction of the Criminal Tribes Act in the course of his remarks on the administration report of 1890, the then Inspector-General piquantly observed that he believed the introduction of the Criminal Tribes Act would be a retrograde step in the administration and that when it was thought not necessary in 1860, when the Police system was organised, it ought not to be necessary now that the Police had been at work for so many years.

Suggestion of the District Magistrate of Kistna.

93. But as regards this tribe of Kaikaries at present, some such provision seems to be quite necessary. Not a day passes without their giving some sort of trouble in some part or other of the two Presidencies Bombay and Madras, so much so that the Inspector-General of Bombay observed in his administrarion report of 1901, that "the Kaikaries especially are proving a very dangerous class of criminals" and therein suggested that the application of the Criminal Tribes Act to this and some other criminal classes in that presidency would prove more effective in reducing crime. In the

I.-G. of Bombay in 1902.

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administration report of 1902 the then Inspector-General of Police, Bombay, puts in that "in the Southern Division the Commissioner observed that recourse was also had to Regulation XII of 1827 in Belgaum and Kolaba with good results. In the latter district, the Commissioner remarks that Kaikaries, Kolis and Katkaris were dealt with under these regulations with a salutary effect. In the Dharwar District the Superintendent is now taking steps to work the regulations. The Mangs and Remoshis of Satara were successfully kept under control by the enforcement of the provisions of Regulation XII of 1827. The Commissioner, Southern Division, refers to Pathans in Belgaum, Chapperband in Bijapur, Kaikaries in Bijapur, Dharwar, Kolaba, Katkaris and Kolis in Kolaba as having given trouble. In Bijapur a gang of Kaikaries was responsible for seven of the heaviest dacoities committed during the year under report. About the end of that year, Dharwar was visited by a gang of Kaikaries from Bellary and Nizam's territory."

I.-G. of Bombay in 1903.

Success of Bombay Regulation XII of 1827.

94. As for Madras Presidency there is not a single district where Korawars do not give trouble of some kind or other every year. The introduction of some such Regulation or enactment even there is quite necessary to bring them round to labour and honest living.

95. Do we not see that the Lambadies * or Branjaries who were their brother tribe living on the same lines of Caravansary and who, having lost their living by the introduction of Railways, took to committing serious crimes of robberies and dacoities often attended with murders just two decades ago in Bombay, Madras, Mysore and Hyderabad have been since improving in their social status? Don't we see that they

Lambadies improvement.

* Lambadi is a corruption of Lavanani, *Lavana* meaning salt. Branjari is a corruption of Vanachari, *vana* meaning forest and *chari* wanderer. They were thus salt carriers and wanderers in forests.

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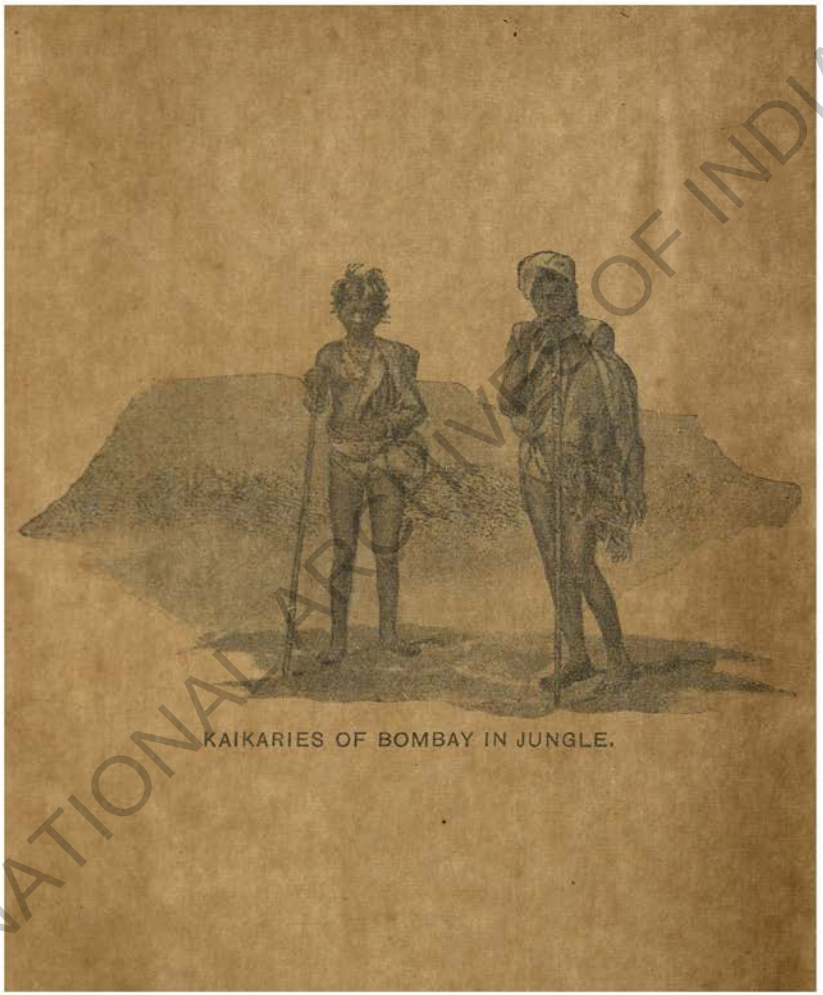

KAIKARIES OF BOMBAY IN JUNGLE.

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have become somewhat law abiding and more settled in habits everywhere, with very few exceptions? Most of them have taken to selling firewood in large villages and towns and also forest produce of different kinds. A good many of them are employed on coffee plantations. They are also engaged as farm labourers by ryots on petty salaries in kind or coin. Some of them own lands close to their settlements which they cultivate, often dealing in grain in the villages adjoining. They are now generally taken into confidence by the ryot classes, and have been showing vast improvements in the social scale.

Futile attempt to live honestly.

96. Even among Korawars, who have not settled anywhere, we find them attempting to behave better near towns and rich villages where they could count upon a pretty large sale of their baskets, ropes, etc., or where they could get some sort of decent living by taking to work as at Bombay where I find some Kaikaries at work in the mills. But their progress seems doubtful or at any rate too slow to vouchsafe any thorough reformation.

Their general detestation.

97. Almost every day they are as a class suspected in all the heinous crimes against property committed in the vicinity. The Police officers and the public generally detest them and the former especially are only anxious to book them in some crime or other. Even the honest village officials are ready to drive them away from their neighbourhood, their grain, vegetables and other produce being quite unsafe from their women and youngsters. The local Magistracy is not without prejudice against them.

Preventive sections of C. C. P. not useful in some places.

98. The increasing attention paid by the Police to preventive sections of the Criminal Procedure Code is in my opinion making matters worse in some places, because for fear of being bound over for good behaviour on the evidence of the villagers, a few of them have

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taken to forest life like so many wild animals pouncing occasionally upon the roads of traffic or on rich houses in villages to rob and retire after the commission of the offence. They find natural resorts of convenience in hills and jungles at a commanding site, where from they can see officers or others coming towards them at a distance, but keep themselves unobserved. If you happen to spot any of their resorts and approach it, you will find all the requisites of a dwelling house but they will take to their heels to another "asramam" as it were, through the thick forest. It is found almost impossible to arrest them in a very recent case with about a hundred followers in such extensive thick forests, whose watchers and guards avoid giving information for fear of their lives.

Fixed settlements advocated.

99. In these circumstances, where can this poor neglected tribe find relief, unless some of the methods suggested by so many experienced officers to ameliorate their condition by agricultural or other suitable settlements are sought for by the Governments of Madras, Bombay, Mysore, Hyderabad, and the Central Provinces.

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THE CRIMINAL TRIBES OF INDIA, NO. I.

**"The History of Railway Thieves with Hints on Detection."**

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THE

# CRIMINAL TRIBES OF INDIA,

NO. III.

# THE HISTORY

OF

## BAURIS, SANSIS, CHAPPERBANDS, CABULEES AND IRANIES.

BY

M. PAUPA RAO NAIDU

*of the Madras Police,*

*Author of "The History of Railway Thieves" and "The History of Korawars or Kaikaries."*

Madras:
HIGGINBOTHAM & CO.

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# INTRODUCTION.

AS promised in the Introduction of my second booklet on the "Criminal Tribes of India," I place my notes before the public about the history of five more of them,* whose operations are not confined to one Province, in this brochure No. III. with a few illustrations.

*1 Bauris.
2 Sansis.
3 Chapperbands.
4 Cabulees.
5 Iranies.

2. As I was singularly fortunate in having been deputed on special duty twice and able to visit most of the important places between Cape Comorin and Peshawar, I took advantage of it to collect all possible information regarding the various criminal tribes. I have not failed to secure and extract certain important portions from the reports of the very first officers such as Sir William Sleeman and Capt. Harvey who organized the Thuggee and Dacoity department and devoted all their energies to collecting information about the origin of each tribe and to putting down their crime. Some of these extracts which have never been published may not be thought useful by the present generation of Police officers in the investigation of crime, but still they are too interesting and valuable to be lost sight of by the Public. The ways and habits of these tribes have been carefully followed up to date and their present *modus operandi* has been noted so as to be useful to the Police and interesting to the public.

3. As the first three tribes are also proved to be coiners and as the circulation of counterfeit rupees is on the increase everywhere in India, I add a few hints extracted from the Railway Police orders on how to distinguish counterfeit from genuine coins for the benefit of the Public.

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4. Feeling grateful to all the officers whose information has been extracted in this booklet, I specially thank Mr. Fawcett, the Deputy Inspector-General of Police, C. I. D. and Railways, as he was kind enough in the midst of his heavy work to go through the proofs and give valuable suggestions here and there.

5. The Almighty has so far helped me in thus bringing out three volumes in the midst of my heavy work. I hope to be able to complete also the fourth volume on the rest of the important criminal tribes very shortly, as the encouragement I receive from the Punjab to Travancore and Karachee to Goalpara by orders for my books is itself a strong impulse for me to do so.

1*st November*, 1907. M. PAUPA RAO NAIDU.

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TYPES OF BAURIS.

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CHAPTER I.

## BAURIS or BAWARIES.

BAURIS are one of the worst Criminal tribes of India. The sphere of their operations extends throughout the length and breadth of the country. They not only commit robberies, burglaries and thefts, but also practice the art of manufacturing and passing counterfeit coins. To gain these ends they put on the garb of holiness, calling themselves Bairagees, Goshains, Sadhus, Brahmacharins, Pardesees, Ayodya Brahmins, Kasi Brahmins, Dwarka Brahmins and Rajput Brahmins of Muttra and Brindaban, and so on. There are many other criminal classes who disguise themselves in the manner stated above, yet these Bauris take the lead in number and crime.

Disguises.

The Bauris or Kothals in Orissa and in the Ganjam District, are an innocent class above Thandasies and are generally palanquin bearers but do all sorts of work such as digging earth, breaking stones, etc. They are also chiefly employed as (vettis) servants of villages under the term Barya. They are Hindus, and though not allowed like Thandasies into Hindu houses, they do not eat beef. True Odra Brahmins do not allow others but Bauris to carry their palanquins.

2. According to Sir William Sleeman, who put down Thagi in India, these Bauris were also called Budhuks, Bagoras, Bagris, Takurgars, Moogeas, Haburas, Marwaris, Surkhowas in different parts of India. Their original homes were the jungles of Mewar or Odeypoor in Marwar where they mostly subsisted on the produce and game of the forests, but they left their original abode and moved to different parts of India owing to a severe famine consequent on the siege of Chitore by the Emperor of Delhi for 12 years. A confession recorded below corroborates the above account.

Their Origin according to Sir William Sleeman.

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3. According to a circular issued by Sleeman to his subordinates on the 23rd September, 1839, all the colonies of robbers commonly known by the name of Budhuks, seemed to him to come from one common stock—the Bauris of Mewar. All the branches of this criminal tribe, wherever located in India, appeared to him to follow robbery as a profession, to speak only the original language among themselves and no other except when they require to communicate with other people or to conceal from other people their identity.

Their clans and main divisions.

4. They divide themselves into eight Gotras or clans :— (1) Chowhan, (2) Rathore, (3) Puwar, (4) Charun, (5) Solenky, (6) Bhatty, (7) Dandul and (8) Gehlote, and they go by different names in different parts of the country where they happen to settle. In the Eastern parts of the Oudh Turae, they are called Seear Khowas ; in the Western part of the Turae, Marwares. In other parts, all those who practice *dacoity* with open violence are called Budhuks, as they were called, when protected formerly by the chiefs of Cumona, Sasnee, Mursaum and Hatras. Colonies of the same tribe who do not commit dacoity are numerous in the Upper Doab and the Delhi territories, and are called Bauris. In Gwalior, Alwar, Jaipur, Bhurtpore and Kurowle, they are called Bagoras, and in Malwa and some other parts of Rajputana, Bagries, but they all call each other Bauris, and consider the local names as mere nicknames, though the only one of these considered absolutely odious is Seear Khowa.

5. In another para. of his note on Budhuks, Sleeman adds that "In Southern India, the Bagrees *alias* Bauris, are commonly known by the name of Takurgars" and concludes that there they speak the Guzeratee language, in the same manner as the rest of the fraternity do in all the other parts of India. In Bhopal State and in some other places in the North, they still go by the name of Budhuks and are watched by the Police.

6. Then again according to the confessions recorded on the 7th May, 1839, before Lieut. C. E. Mills, Assistant General

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Superintendent, from the leading Bauris and forwarded to Sleeman, then Commissioner of Muradabad, the Bauri caste is described as follows:—

Lieut. Mills' account of them.

"The Baurie caste was originally Rajputs and our ancestors came from Marwar. We have eight Gotras or clans. Two or three centuries ago when the Emperor of Delhi attacked the fortress of Chitore, and besieged it for 12 years for the sake of the Princess Padmini, the country became desolate, and scarcity and distress prevailed. We were obliged to emigrate in search of subsistence and employment and had to disperse and settle in different parts of the country. We are not people of yesterday—we are of ancient and illustrious descent. When the demon Ravanan took away the wife of the god Ram, and Ram followed him to recover her, men of all castes went to fight for him in the holy cause; among them was a leader of the Bauris, whose name was Pardhee, and whose occupation was hunting. When Ram vanquished his enemy and recovered Seetha, he asked Pardhee what he could do for him—'grant' said Pardhee, 'that I may attend your Majesty's mount guard, and hunt in the intervals of leisure, and I shall then have all that my heart wishes.' The god granted his request, and his occupation has descended down to us. If any Prince happens to have an enemy that he wishes to have made away with, he sends for some of our tribe, and says "go and bring such or such a one's head;" we go, steal into his sleeping apartments, and take off the person's head without any person knowing anything about it. We who came to the Delhi territory and were called Bauris took to the trade of thieving."

7. These Bauris are now called Delhiwala Bauris and a few of this tribe that are now settled in Central India are called Malpurias They freely mix with one other for purposes of crime and there are intermarriages.

8. Though I do not give much weight to the truth of the legend given in the above confession, yet there can be no doubt that they all originally belonged to a tribe that lived in the jungles of Mewar or Odeypur subsisting upon roots and

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the produce of the chase and that they scattered from there into the various parts of India and took to committing highway robberies and dacoities, the confusion that then naturally resulted from the frequent changes in the kings giving them ample scope to continue their predatory expeditions. Anyhow in course of time they gained the goodwill and patronage of the petty rajahs and of the rich landholders of the places wherein they happend to live. They were gradually dreaded so much that the travelling public were compelled to resort to the expedient of hiring the services of some of them as escorts to ensure their safety *en route*. The inhabitants of the villages adjoining the haunts of these robbers were also obliged to bespeak their goodwill and protection by engaging some of them as watchmen, just as the Ramoosees of Bombay, and the Kallars and Maravars of the Southern Presidency. They often formed themselves into regular bands of brigands and attacked and plundered villages. But after the spread of the net work of Railways, many of their old roads have been deserted by the public and seeing that there is not much booty to be gained on the roads, they have taken advantage of the Railways and have now become experts in milder forms of crime, namely thefts and burglaries. Occasionally they do not shrink from using violence to the inmates of the houses when effecting their escape with the booty or carrying away sleeping females, cots and all, to the backyards to deprive them of their jewels.

Employment as Watchmen.

9. Sir W. H. Sleeman tried his best to domicile and settle the Bauris along with the Thugs by taking many of them as approvers, by granting them free pardon and also by establishing an institution for them at Jubbalpore under Capt. Charles Brown in the year 1838. This school of industry where various kinds of useful articles were manufactured gave work to hundreds of these dacoits and thugs, their women and children. Their children were also taught to read and write and even trained to perform in little theatres, but all to no good purpose. Though a few of them took advantage

A School of Industry for them.

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of this noble institution, yet the majority of them had only to be put down by very rigorous measures such as hanging and transportation.

Not joining Pasigors in Madras.

10. Just about this time Thugs were in full swing everywhere in India. Even in the Madras Presidency there were innumerable instances of "Pasigors" or Thugs committing dacoities attended with the most horrible murders, in cold blood, of some of their credulous companion travellers. A perusal of "Ramaseena" a sorrowful but interesting book of Sir W. H. Sleeman will relate to you how the travellers from Bangalore, Bellary and the Northern Circars were butchered by the Mussalman thugs of Cuddapah and North Arcot. But in Ramaseena no mention was made of Bauris having committed any crime in the Madras Presidency at the time, though there is some reference about their presence in Hyderabad. Evidently there was no field for them then in Madras which had its own "Pasigors" everywhere. With the rise and stability of the British Government, they have been gradually brought to subjection by severe legislative measures and the regular Executive and Judicial staff to put such laws into effect.

Criminal Tribes Act to settle them.

11. This Bauri tribe, like some others, was dealt with under the Criminal Tribes Act and attempts were made to induce them to settle down to a peaceful agricultural life, by free grants of land in Bedowli in the Muzafarnagar District in Meerut Division of the United Provinces. In this way many of them took up their residence as cultivators in the villages of Khanpur, Chotakanpur, Khedi, Ahmadnagar, Alladipur, Lakan, Dabidi, Doodli, Khutsa, Navazbad, Bangalu and in some other villages in a Zemindari belonging to one Ajgar Hussein in the same District of Muzafarnagar. Hence they are now called the Bauris of Muzafarnagar though they have now settled in every Presidency or Province in some disguise or other. The District Superintendent of that District has been paying special attention

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to them by taking the finger impressions of every one of them so that their identity might be traced when caught. Having been thus settled in a certain spot they were subjected to strict rules of surveillance, and attempts were off and on made to educate their children by opening small schools. These measures were partially successful in diverting their hereditary propensities and many of them settled down peacefully in their new settlement as husbandsmen and farmers. The surveillance was gradually relaxed and people abroad also began to forget them and their mischief; their ingrained hereditary and criminal instincts began to sprout: they were disgusted with this quiet life beset with toil and difficulties, and began to leave their homes and wander about in disguises to distant Provinces, travelling by trains, in order that they might satisfy their craving for plunder without incurring the displeasure of the local officials. As I have already said, their sanctimonious guise gave them facilities for freely travelling about the country without their being suspected or deterred, and for committing burglaries with impunity.

Surveillance relaxed.

12. As a party of Bauris who settled themselves down as agriculturalists in the Mysore State about the year 1894 committed innumerable burglaries, often causing hurt to the inmates of the houses, enquiries were made about them, and a valuable record was made by the Inspector-General of Police, Mysore, in 1901 about their settlements, their origin, their habits, their external appearances and modes of life, their present *modus operandi*, their distinguishing characteristics, and of the kind of offences committed by them. I am induced to extract a few paras. from that record to show their conduct as follows, adding here and there my own observations :—

Their settlement in Mysore before 1894.

13. Their common language is a corrupt form of Guzerati, but many of them can also talk Hindustani and Urdu and understand the vernaculars of Districts where they had any lengthened sojourn for purposes of plunder.

Language.

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Religion.

14. They worship most of the Hindu deities, such as Narasimha, Durga, Siva and Vishnu, and they also show great respect to Gosayis and Pirs. They keep with them a small quantity of wheat and sandal seeds in a small tin or brass case which they call 'Devakadana' or 'God's grain,' and a tuft of peacock feathers, all in a bundle. They profess to worship this bundle and consult it as an oracle. They offer animal sacrifices to propitiate their deities, the flesh of which the males alone partake of, the women being prohibited from eating the same.

Habits and customs.

15. As a rule they are flesh-eaters and are addicted to drinking. They not only smoke tobacco, maddat and ganja, but also eat opium. They spend their money very lavishly on such luxuries whenever they succeed in making a good haul in their predatory adventures.

Marriage.

16. Their marriage ceremony is simple. They beat small drums (Dolaks) and collect themselves around the bride and bridegroom and the headman of the gang offers the bride to the bridegroom and then cloths are presented to both by the elders of the opposite parties. The couple is made to bathe together and then the presented cloths are worn by them. They are made to sit again before the assembly for a while when the actual drink and feast commence. Their favourite beverage is toddy. Widows are allowed to re-marry, and very often the younger brother of the husband is allowed to take the elder's widow to wife. Immoral conduct on the part of their married women is ordinarily visited with excommunication, but the sin could also be expiated by the party undergoing a ceremony of purification as follows:—The tongue of such a female is branded with a burning margosa twig. She is then taken to a jungle, and a sheep is taken thrice round her and cut and the pieces thrown into the air and allowed to be eaten by vultures and beasts of prey.

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17. They are very superstitious and do not embark on any enterprise without first ascertaining by omens whether it will be attended with success or not. This they do by taking at random a small quantity of grain out of their Devakadana and counting the number of grains, the omen being considered good or bad according as the number of seeds is odd or even.

Omens.

18. The Bauris mark their foreheads with either sacred ash or Gopichandanam as the Saivaites do, or wear namams like the Vaishnavites. They also wear thulasi or coral beads or rudrakshams, and sometimes put on the sacred thread though they are not entitled to wear it. Some shave their heads, and others allow the hair to grow. They are well built persons of moderate height, from 5 ft. 3 in. to 5 ft. 6 in.; and they generally carry with them rude musical instruments, such as Kanjori, Sithar and Dolak. They invariably have two names, one given by the parents and the other by the Guru or priest. The disciple of a Gosayi affixes 'giri' to his name, while a proselyte of a Bairagi affixes 'das' to his name. They usually dress themselves as Gosayis or Bairagies. Delhiwalla Bauris tie their Dhotar in a peculiar way, the left leg and thigh being practically bare. The Dhotar is a small one.

External appearance and dress.

19. The more settled among them have taken to agriculture and are reported to lead a peaceful life. Even among these, some have recourse to their old thievish habits in the intervals of agricultural operations. The others lead a restless nomadic life. They generally travel about the country as pilgrims and mendicants with their families and sometimes in groups. There is generally a headman or sometimes two for each group or section and more than one group occasionally travel together. In such travels, their ostensible means of livelihood is begging from house to house, or *sadabart* doles given in chattrams and other charitable

Modes of life.

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institutions. They generally try to avoid recognition by people and do not give out their real names. Their females do not ordinarily go out a-begging except when the males are absent or sick and unable to beg. They also maintain a few ponies to carry their luggage and some dogs to watch.

Their real pursuit is house-breaking and theft in which they are very expert and they keep wandering about the country in search of likely houses for carrying on their nefarious trade.

*The following is an extract from the Police Administration Report of North-West Provinces for* 1899.

* * * "The latter tribe (Bauris) go far afield to commit their depredations, sending the stolen property to their homes and even largely utilizing the Post Office for making remittances. They have also been recently discovered to be expert coiners and passers of counterfeit coin. Supervision over them has been hitherto slack.

"The finger impressions of a large number of them have however been secured and I would point out the advisability of similar methods being adopted in dealing with them."

Their *modus operandi.*

20. When they intend to commit burglaries in a particular village or town, they generally put up at a mantap or tope at a short distance from it. Under the pretext of going about begging, they look out for houses suitable for breaking into. They note carefully children and women wearing jewels and thus mark out such of the houses as appear to belong to rich people. This information is communicated to the leader of the group. Then the leader and some of the men go about the marked house by turns and note carefully the position of the windows, the locks and bolts attached to the doors and other details. In order to do this effectually, they contrive to get inside the house on some pretext or other



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during the absence of the men of the household. Having carefully noted these details, they fix a convenient night for the commission of the offence. Before commencing their operation, they usually throw a few pebbles or small stones, while muttering some incantations, at the door and on the roof of the house to satisfy themselves whether the inmates are fast asleep or not. Some of them then proceed to effect an entrance into the premises while the rest keep watch on different sides. The usual method is to bore a small hole in the wall near a doorway so as to insert their hand and push the bolt on the inside aside and open the door. They also manage to enter through the windows by bending or pulling off the iron bars. They keep a sharp instrument made of steel with the head shaped like a broad spoon and the handle like a crowbar. With the sharp end they make the hole and use the spoon-like top for shovelling out the earth and brickbats. In order to avert suspicion, they conceal it always by burying it underground near their camps and take it out only when they start on their expeditions at night. They also carry clubs to serve them as weapons of offence or defence according to circumstances. They carry matches and strike a light after getting inside the house to enable them to look about for the valuables. The jewels and ornaments on the person of the sleeping females or children are very skilfully removed without disturbing them. They take out boxes of valuables, break or force them open not far from the house, and take away only the gold and silver ornaments throwing away cloths and other identifiable articles. Sometimes when the cloths are richly laced, the laced portions alone are taken. Sometimes very ordinary cloths, when not identifiable, are taken and used only after being dyed a different colour. The stolen articles are made up into bundles and entrusted to one of their members for carrying. This man follows the gang at a distance on their way to camp. The object of this arrangement is to provide for the safe carriage of the booty even if the gang should be espied or pursued. Whenever they get large

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women, who always lose children or who often fall ill, see these Gaddé women moving about, they call them into their houses, make them sit and pouring some grain into their winnows, ask them about their past misery and future lot. These women who are sufficiently trained to speak in suitable language are clever enough to give out some yarns in equivocal terms so that the anxious women who generally hope for better futurity understand them in the light uppermost in their own minds. The Korawa women will be rewarded duly and doubly too, for they never fail to study the nature of the house all the time, to see if it offers a fair field for booty to their men.

Jathipalli Korawars.

23. An offshoot of this class go by the name of Jathipalli Korawars who are prevalent in the Southern districts of the Madras Presidency moving always in gangs and giving much trouble. Their women tattoo for grain, money or cloths and help their men as others of their class in getting acquainted with the nature and contents of the houses.

Koonchi Korawars.

24. The Koonchi or Koochi (brush) Korawars form the next class. Their ostensible means of livelihood is to make for sale brushes of fibre and straw used by weavers to clean the thread and other villagers to sweep. They also make snares or nets to catch hares, deer and other jungle animals and they are themselves good sportsmen. They are only petty thieves and robbers and are not known to have been concerned in heavy burglaries and house dacoities, as their brethren mentioned in previous paras.

Kallu Korawars.

25. The 8th class is styled Kallu Korawars (*Kallu* means *stone*). Their ostensible living is by mending stones and working on roads by carrying stones and mud. They are a dangerous lot like the Woddars, some of whom who toil all the day will not fail to join in a burglary or dacoity, refreshing themselves with a good feed and liquor. During the day men, women and

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boys work on roads and stones or go about from village to village in quest of work. In the Northern Circars they are also called Wadde Erukulas.

Gadepatti Kaikaries.

26. Gadepatti Kaikaries come next. According to Major Gunthorpe, the name was derived from "Gadee" jungle, and "Puttee" district. They have a tradition that their ancestors always lived in deep forests. Their ostensible means of livelihood is also basket-making like that of their brethren in other classes. But they are reported to live at a respectable distance from villagers. They are a bad lot, especially those living in the Nizam's frontiers. Not long ago these Kaikaries went far into the Canara district and committed numberless dacoities and about 30 of them were convicted by the Special Magistrate of the Thuggee and Dacoity department who had also Sessions powers.

Koot or Kothee Kaikaries.

27. No. 10 is called Koot or Kothee Kaikaries both in the Madras and Bombay Presidencies. *Koot* meaning *dancing*. They obtain their living by the prostitution of their women. They also kidnap or sell children for this purpose. Some of the women of this class are thriving well in the Madras Presidency as experts in dancing. They are kept by rich people and are called in the Telugu country Erukala Bogamvaru, in Tamil, Korawa Thevidia. They also train monkeys to play and show them to the public as their very name *Kothee* meaning monkey implies. They are thieves and pickpockets.

Pam Kaikaries.

28. No. 11 is known as Pam Kaikaries generally met with in the Bombay Presidency. They exhibit serpents from door to door and beg as they go wandering from vilage to village. *Pam* means *serpent*.

Bhajantree Kaikaries.

No. 12 is Bhajantree Kaikaries. The word means the village musicians. They are found here and there in small villages in the Madras and Bombay Presidencies. They attend marriages

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and other feasts with their ordinary rude music and get some remuneration from the villagers annually besides being paid for on those occasions. The barber class is slowly ousting them in this profession also.

Mahommedan Korawars.

29. A gang of these Korawars in Southern India embraced the Mahommedan faith about a century ago. There are about 20 families of these Mahommedan Korawars now living in the village of Muthiapuram in the Tuticorin Police division. They gave up their criminal habits and have been living the life of honest husbandmen owning houses and lands, still under a leader who helps them with funds and lands.

Their dress and general appearance.

30. The men and women can be easily identified as belonging to this class unless they take special care to disguise themselves as Kapus and Balijas which they often do. They are naturally dark in color. The men do not generally wear any clothes, but always move with pieces of cloth round their loins or langoties and with a dirty turband on which completes their attire. In the Bombay Presidency, however, they wear a coarse coat and cloth and many well-to-do members, generally heads of gangs, wear also silver waistcords and bangles. The women generally put on dark coarse cloths and bodices of any color worn after the manner of the Tamilians. But when stolen cloths are had, they remove the borders before using them to baffle identification. Their cloths, as a rule, are very dirty and the men and the women stink awfully as they do not bathe for days together. The men never get shaved, but allow the hair to grow and tie the locks in a knot on the top. Sometimes a cloth called "Joochi" is tied round the loins and a shelved cloth bag wherein they keep tobacco and betel is carried in it.

Their ornaments.

31. The women deck themselves with necklaces of shells and cowries mixed with other kinds of beads and corals. They wear brass and silver bangles and also rings of different kinds of metals.

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They attach cowries to their bags of betel and to the bags wherein they secure their property.

Religion.

32. In religion, they are Vaishnavites worshipping Perumall or Venkatesvarlu and minor deities such as Bhawānee, Mahalatchmi, Māremma, Kollāpuremma, Durga, etc., eating the pig, fox, jackal, cat, crow and other animals killed as offering to the deity. To worship a god they need not go to any temple nor are they allowed to enter any. In the Madras Presidency they generally keep a stone or mud idol under a Nim tree smearing it with saffron and some red stuff and calling it by any of the above names, worship it, offering cocoanuts and burning incense and camphor. This worship is followed by a carousal, when toddy is drunk freely and meals eaten heartily. In the Bombay Presidency, according to the statement given before Captain Harvey by some leaders of Kaikaries as approvers, the worship is as follows :—

"We worship an idol of mud representing a female, *viz.*, "Bhowānee"; we pay devotions to none but her; but during the Dusserah festival we, as is common among other people, worship our "Durratee" (pruning hook)*. The following is the ceremony we observe in our worship of Bhowanee: after having committed a robbery, the day following our return to our encampment we make an image and dress it in blue cloths, and mark the eyelids, as customary among women with lamp-black, the forehead with red ochre; we place a pearl ring on the nostrils, and a black bead necklace round the throat; in short, we ornament

* It is a custom among all Hindus during the "Dusserah" to ornament with flowers, etc., the instruments of their trade or occupation, before which they make offerings and go through ceremonies of worship; as for instance the Budayee or carpenter will worship his saw, chisel, plane and other tools; the Koonbee or cultivator, his ploughshare, harrow, etc.; the Goundee or bricklayer, his thapie or trowel and so on. The Duratee being the instrument used in basket-making by these kaikaries for cutting reeds, grass, etc., it is accordingly worshipped by this class particularly, in order to preserve their apparent identity of being basket-makers, pure and simple.

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and dress it just like a woman ; we then kill some fowls and a goat, and get some liquor, and with the ceremony attending the worship of Bhowanee some go through the usual forms of worship. After which, having feasted on the above, we entrust the idol at mid-day to four men of the gang, with injunctions to be careful not to allow any injury to happen to it in the limbs or anywhere, and to take it into the jungle and deposit it erect in a hole under some tree or other, which is done accordingly and a bow and an arrow is then placed upright in front of it, a lime being fixed upon the point of the arrow, and thus it is left there."

33. The following extract taken from a confession before Captain Harvey about their omens and conventional language will be found interesting :—

*Question.*—Do you people observe any omens ?

*Answer.*—" We do, and attend to them also : should we have sallied forth intent on a preconcerted robbery, and a snake cross our road, or a wolf, or should we meet any body driving towards us two bullocks tied together, or should a red crow (the Malabar pheasant) fly across our path, or should we squabble, and any one of us bleed, or should any one of our " Hundies" get broken, or a mongoose cross our road—on any one of these events occurring we always put off the expedition ; or if the Jamadar, when he has left the main body of the gang, have gone for information as to where to commit a robbery as above, and any one of the above omens occur near any village which he was about to enter, he will never enter that village.

Omens bad.

34. But, on the contrary, should we, after having sallied on an expedition, believe that nothing will be obtained, and should we give up the enterprize in consequence, and return to our encampment, and any one of the above omens take place, we consider it favourable, and we will invariably turn back again, and take up the enterprize we had abandoned, and be successful besides.

Omens good.

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35. *Question.*—Have you any conventional language among you, known only to yourselves when engaged in Dacoity?

*Answer.*—We have, which is known only to such of our caste as are Dacoits; the following are some instances, namely:—

Slang language.

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Oota patwa or Oota patwachwa which means | ... | Go and examine the house. |
| Oota patwando | ... | I have looked at a house. |
| Nullaikidu ... | ... | It promises. It is good. |
| Kullee Mutta durkoo | ... | We shall get plenty of gold. |
| Ootoolsee wurwo nurra | ... | Let us proceed to the attack. |
| Put tulgus ... | ... | I am wounded. |
| Aree ... | ... | Strike. |
| Purree ... | ... | Take, seize (*i.e.*, plunder). |
| Wullumbee po or Odu | ... | Run, run. |
| Kullee respo ... | ... | Bury the gold. |
| Welee mool por weedgee | ... | Place the thorns on the road. |
| Wulluk putwee ... | ... | Light the torch. |
| Purkia Wunj ... | ... | They have come to seize us. |
| Kullee ... | ... | Gold. |
| Welee ... | ... | Silver. |
| Toot ... | ... | Copper change (pice). |
| Boot ... | ... | Gold coins usually strung on to necklaces. |
| Tippun ... | ... | The rendezvous. |
| Oot ... ... | ... | A house, home, the house fixed upon. |
| Oonûs ... | ... | A dacoity, robbery. |
| Oot kulleepoor ... | ... | Break through the house, *i.e.*, dig a hole in the wall. |
| Nullad ... | ... | Good, well. |
| Ikree or iked ... | ... | It is, there is. |
| Thuree also kaikool | ... | A club. |
| Kowlee kul ... | ... | Sling and its pebble. |
| Kurb, eid and kuttee and illumb ... | ... | A sword. |
| Ootur kor ... | ... | A spear. |
| Nichnee kor ... | ... | A ladder. |
| Nichnee korwe ... | ... | Apply the ladder. |
| Winlakul ... | ... | Money, cash, rupees. |
| Wulluk ... | ... | The torch. |
| Pillich or pillick-kitch | ... | Caught, arrested. |
| Oonde ponah ... | ... | He has escaped. |
| Sookhoon—ass ... | .. | An omen has passed. |

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| | |
|---|---|
| Kan-kakee ... | ... A sepoy. |
| Tullunj ... | ... It has become known, we have been discovered. |
| Tulla-wussul ... | ... A door. |
| Sootwan ... | ... A pugree, turban. |
| Tulla wussul moos iked | ... The door is shut. |
| Pupupiatee ... | ... A woman. |
| Pumla ... | ... A girl (of a Dacoit). |
| Oorpun ... | ... A girl of a villager or stranger, or in the house to be attacked. |
| Poolloo ... | ... Ornaments, jewels. |
| Polmâh ... | ... Ornaments, jewels. |
| Oortee ... | ... A grown-up woman. |
| Bûrgai ... | ... One thousand. |
| Kai .. | ... One hundred. |
| Humnee ... | ... Put out, *i.e.*, the light. |
| Okko or kundu ... | ... Sit down. |
| Ikurd Ponah .. | ... He is dead. |
| Wola moonjee ... | ... An Englishman, a Sahib. |

Such are some of our words in conversation.

*N.B.*—There is a great admixture in the language in which these people converse among themselves, of the Telugu, Canarese, Arvi or Tamil dialects, though most of them are able to talk each of these separately, besides Marathi, Hindustani, etc.; it is in fact, a jargon of the whole though the *Tamil* is chiefly recognized throughout it; in the instances here given of their professional idioms, though many of the words are unintelligible, yet the expressions are made up of a kind of compound of the above languages, and by a person acquainted with all of these, their conversation might, after a time, be detected, or at any rate partially understood.

Marriages.

36. Though they observe no caste differences in eating and drinking, in point of marriages in some of the sections of the community they seem to be very particular. They freely admit other caste women into theirs, except the lowest orders such as Malas, Madigas and the like. Very often the poorer women among the ryot classes are taken into their families and married. The boys and girls are schooled from their infancy to deny everything asked of them by the villagers or officers. A marriage is generally negotiated between the parents of the bridegroom and of the bride, the former promising to pay a "Voli" of 20 pagodas for the first marriage and two pagodas for the re-marriage of a man or a woman. This



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Voli is not generally paid in cash, but calculated in so many asses, bullocks, etc., given to the girl's father by the father of the bridegroom. But if he is not able to give the Voli then, wholly or partially, it will be left in arrears till his children liquidate it or till the girls of this new family are given in marriage to the boys of the other, when this debt is paid up or the balance deducted from the Voli settled upon then. The ceremony itself is very simple. They place two pots in front of the huts of the bride and bridegroom, and also some raw rice in a brass tray. On the rice a small vessel with water is placed, over which again is kept a cocoanut which they call "Kalisam." The bride and bridegroom wearing new cloths presented by the bride's parents are made to stand or sit there before the Kalisam and some incense burnt. The women in attendance sing some songs and then the Tali consisting of black beads is tied on by the bridegroom to the bride. The ceremony is then followed by a drunken revel all the day. Generally the marriage is over in one day, though drinking continues for three days at the expense of the parents of the couple if they happen to spare funds. No such ceremony however takes place when a woman is re-married. The bridegroom invites his relations and friends to a sumptuous repast and the Tali is quietly tied on before them.

37. The marriage tie is not considered so sacred by this as by the other Indian communities. A woman can at any moment without compunction sever her Tali and marry another in the same gang or in a neighbouring gang. So also their men can drive away their wives and marry cast-off women. A man may marry two, three or even more wives and live with them all together at times in one small hut. Having two wives is common with them. More wives are had not according to their physical capabilities but according to their circumstances.

38. When any man of a gang goes to jail, the wife selects another partner for the period of her husband's absence, going back to him on his release, with all her children even though born to the temporary husband.

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41. In a valuable note on counterfeit coins and coiners, Mr. F. A. M. H. Vincent, District Superintendent of Police (Bombay) who was specially engaged in the investigation of coining cases, says that the so-called Guzerathi Banris are numerically less strong and less known than the Chapperbands in following the art of counterfeiting coins as a profession and in passing them. This class also originally hailed from Márwár of which tract Bauris were natives. Some families possibly migrated into Guzerat and, being akin to the Waghris, a branch of the great Bauria tribe, no doubt intermarried with them, thus gaining for themselves the name of Guzerathi Bauria. Though they were said to reside in several places and practice their calling assiduously, little was known of them till the arrest of a large gang with their typical moulds and counterfeits by the Indore Police as stated already.

Mr. Vincent on their coining.

42. It may not be out of place to mention here that hard metalled counterfeit rupees such as those made of pure silver or of an alloy of copper and silver can be made in mud moulds. I have had such rupees made in such moulds before a Committee consisting of the Hon'ble Mr. H. A. Sim, Sir H. A. Stuart, Esq., K.C V.O., C.S.I., F. Fawcett, Esq., and Mr. Sankaran Nayar, the then Acting Government Pleader and others about the year 1899, when Mr. Justice Moore, then District Judge at Bellary, had remarked that silver rupees could never be made except in metal dies, and based the acquittal of the accused in the case before him on the ground of such physical impossibility.

An extract from the *Madras Mail*, dated the 25th February, 1899, printed below will be of some use to the Police and the Magistracy in the disposal of cases in which such moulds and counterfeits are exhibited in open Court.

**"HOW COUNTERFEIT RUPEES ARE MADE.**

"Mr Lewis Moore, Sessions Judge of Bellary, in the course of his judgment in the Anantapur counterfeit-coining case

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the other day, remarked :—A shroff employed in the Madras Bank was produced as an expert witness, and he gave useful evidence with respect to several suspected rupees produced in this case. But this witness was never employed in a Mint, and he admits he knows nothing as to the manner in which coins—counterfeit or genuine are manufactured. The case the prosecution put forward was that certain clay moulds such as those produced in this case, have been used by the prisoners for the purpose of making false rupees. It appears to me to be quite impossible to accept this view of the case. The assessors and I have carefully examined these moulds and I have no hesitation in holding that it would be utterly impossible to manufacture rupees, approaching in any degree the excellence of workmanship shown in the counterfeit coins found in the first prisoner's house by moulds such as the two that are marked A2 and 3. It may be here noted that the Madras Bank shroff, after a careful examination of all the suspected rupees produced, gave it as his opinion that those marked K, showed a high style of workmanship and he, indeed, went so far as to say that they were in that respect superior to those manufactured in the Government Mints."

"From information that has reached us it would appear that the manufacture of rupees with moulds similar to those exhibited in the case is not so difficult as the Judge supposes. Mr. Paupa Rao Naidu, the detective who was engaged in the Anantapur case, has since been making careful enquiries into the method of manufacture, and he has found a man who can turn out false rupees practically undistinguishable from the minted coin. The moulds are made of finely powdered and carefully sifted granite, with which honey is mixed, until the required consistency is obtained. By an ingenious arrangement of a ring-frame, with a thin hollow tube attached, the coiner is able to make a perfect mould of a minted rupee, with an impression that lacks nothing in finish and appearance. Two men working with these moulds can turn out about 30 false rupees a day that will pass current anywhere, provided the proper proportions of alloy is used. How pro-

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fitable the transaction must be may be gathered from the fact that 100 tolas (100 rupee-weight) of bar silver can be bought for a little over Rs. 70. To these 100 tolas of silver are added 10 tolas of copper, and so it follows that the coiner gets Rs. 110 for an outlay of less than Rs. 80, including the price of the copper and the cost of labour. We learn that Mr. Paupa Rao Naidu is prepared to demonstrate these facts at any time, and the Finance Department would do well to enquire into the matter. Despite Mr. O'Conor's declaration before the Currency Commission, there is an uneasy feeling abroad that counterfeit-coining is going on to a considerable extent in some parts of India."

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## CHAPTER II.

## SANSIS or KANJARS or BERIAS.

THIS is another troublesome tribe that originated in Bhurtpore territories but spread all over India engaged in crimes of all descriptions including burglaries and dacoities with violence like their brethren Bauris. This tribe also was dealt with briefly by Major Gunthrope of the Berar Police in his "Notes on Criminal Tribes."

According to Sir W. Sleeman the following is the account of their origin :—

Origin.

2. Many years ago there were two brothers who resided in the Bhurtpore territories. Their names were Sains Mull and Sansi. The descendants of the former were called Berias, those of the latter Sansis or Sansia Bhats—each had a dialect of its own—the Sansis called the Berias, Dholees and styled themselves Bhantoo—the Berias called the Sansis, Mahais. The Berias wandered about playing the dhol (drum) and begging ; their women were regular prostitutes. The Sansis lived chiefly by begging and secondly by selling cattle, goats, ponies and donkeys and sieves, ropes, sirkis (mats for huts), etc. But both these tribes have been known to commit thefts, burglaries, as well as to plunder travellers in lonely spots, and houses in isolated villages causing violence to the victims. Recent records show that the second or latter division of these Sansis, often called Sansi Kanjars, are more numerous and worse than the others and they have now added other branches to their profession, *viz.*, cattle-lifting and passing counterfeit coins.

Chroniclers of the Jats.

3. According to a traditional legend of their own, when the two brothers (Sains Mull and Sansi) were alive, a person named Mullanoor who was descended from the famous Poonja Jat, ordered that a certain subsidy should be paid to the Sansis by the Jats :

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and the Sansis, therefore, in former days called themselves beggars from the Jat tribe. In the Sansi tribe, it was customary to chronicle the names of the Jats and their ancestors. The Jats on this account styled the Sansis their bards or *Jatka-Bhat*. When the Jats celebrated their marriages they used to invite the Sansis, their bhats, who recited the praises of their ancestors and—in consideration for presents—traced them to the time of Poonja Jat.

4. The Sansis were of two families, the Kalhas and Malhas, but they have often been styled Kanjars. Latterly they do not admit the appellation perhaps on the ground that there is a class called Kanjars among Mussalmans and that in Southern India some Kanjars are shoemakers. The Sansis are all Hindus.

Capt. Ellis' account of them.

5. According to the story given by some elderly Sansis in their confessions before Capt. Ellis, the Assistant to the Resident at Gwalior in 1842, they said that their ancestors resided in Márwár and Ajmere districts ever since the *Satya Yug*, that a few hundred years ago one Bootee, a woman of the Sansi tribe was very intimate with a powerful Zemindar in Márwár, and her husband discovered the intimacy at an annual *Chutree Poojah* and began beating her for it, when her brother interfered; a fight took place but was stopped by their mutual friends and relations. About a month afterwards this Bootee's husband suspecting her brother to have connived at her intimacy with the Zemindar persuaded her brother to accompany him into the jungles on a sporting excursion, where he murdered him. Bootee discovered the murder, and revenged the death of her brother, by stabbing her husband. She then fled, to avoid the anger of his relations, and betrayed the members of her tribe to the Kota Raja. The latter gave her two hundred horsemen and some sepoys with whom she arrested large numbers of the Sansis, killing many who attempted to escape. She also broke down and defiled the *chutrées* erected over the graves of their ancestors. The Sansis then left the Márwár territories and emigrated in various directions some coming to the South.

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6. They invariably travelled with women and children. Anything ominous prevented them from starting on any one of their usual excursions. They paid particular attention to omens when starting. The crying of a jackal, the sight of a cat, the mourning over a deceased relation, the sneezing of a human being, the running of a dog with human food in its mouth, a kite screaming on a tree, the breaking of a pot by a woman when drawing water were considered portentous.

Omens.

Some of their favourable omens are meeting a milk maid, a person carrying grain or money, a person with a potful of water, a marriage procession, a person carrying a fish, seeing a pig, etc.

7. The following note on the marriage laws of the Berias and Sansis and the sub-sections of these communities by Mr. C. M. Seagrin, Inspector-General of Police, Indore, made in August, 1906, is published for information, being the most recent one on the subject.

Mr. Seagrin on Barias and Sansis in 1906.

"There were formerly some Rajputs living in the village of *Biyan* in *Kanjar, Baroli District* of the *Bharatpur State*. The Gujars and Berias sprang from the Rajputs who lived there. The Gujars took up cultivation and the Berias became wanderers. Among the Berias there were two famous leaders named *Sahamal* and *Sahasi*. The descendants of Sahamal became known as *Berias* and those of Sahasi as *Sansi*—the names slightly differ from the account of Sleeman.

8. "*Berias*. There are 8 clans (or Gotras) of the Beria tribe, namely :—

Gotras of Berias.

1. Kalkhor (Popat).
2. Bithoo (Sub-clans : (i) Mangal, (ii) Chandi).
3. Chandoowad.
4. Gatoo.
5. Kothan.
6. Timaichi.
7. Phura.
8. Gehala.

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"Intermarriage is not permitted in the same clan, but is allowed with any of the other clans except that intermarriage never takes place between the Bithoo and the Gehala clans, because the Bithoos, including its sub-clan Mangals, consider themselves superior to the Gehalas.

9. "*Sansis.* There are 5 clans among them—

(1) Jhojhya, (2) Raichand, (3) Belia, (4) Dursa, (5) Sansi.

Gotras of Sansis.

"Clan No. 1 cannot marry with clan No. 3. Clan No. 2 cannot marry with clan No. 4, but clan No. 1 can marry with clans Nos. 2 and 4; similarly, clan No. 2 can marry with clans Nos. 1 and 3. Clan No. 4 can marry with clans Nos. 1 and 3. Clan No. 5 can only marry among themselves, which is opposed to the custom prevailing in every Hindu class."

The Berias and Sansis have no objection to intermarriage with each other; but the union is always undesirable, and is considered a derogatory one by the Sansis. The Bithoos never intermarry with Sansis.

10. "The Berias and Sansis are known by different names in different provinces of India:—

1. In *Malwa* they are known as *Sansis.*
2. In Gujerat as Popat, Ghagra-Paltan, Wadkutia.
3. In the Western Provinces, such as Sind, as Gidhiye.
4. Beyond the Ganges as Bhantoo.
5. In the United Provinces as Kanjar or Berias.
6. In Gwalior as Bagorias or Berias.
7. In Bengal as Chirokharusal."

11. "The Beria women were generally prostitutes, and the kidnapping of young girls was common among them. A well-to-do Beria often has five or six young girls whom he has either bought or stolen when very young, and whom he keeps for the income he derives from their prostitution. The Sansis women are not nearly so immoral. The men, women and children are habitual thieves, and the men greatly addicted to cattle-lifting, dacoity and highway robbery. They all

Women's morality.



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drink to abnormal extent and consumption is very prevalent among them owing to their constitutions being undermined by drink coupled with the exposure of their nomadic existence.

12. "Both Berias and Sansis come under the major head of Kanjars, in which term are included most of the wandering tribes. Except when engaged on a mutual expedition, Berias and Sansis always keep apart. The Beria is a coarser type of being. The Sansis shows good breeding; and their hands and feet, both in men and women are usually small and well made. Both are equally ferocious and daring. No form of torture will break their secrecy as a rule when captured; whereas they are easily "opened" by an informer of their tribe aided by a little country liquor. They usually pretend to be sweepers, malis, katchis, etc., when interrogated.

13. "When they sally forth on an expedition in gangs, they leave old men, women and children behind them and take young women and mothers with infants as also their donkeys, goats, buffaloes, etc., so that there may not be a suspicious look about them, but appear to be honest gangs winning their bread by trading in cattle and by begging calling themselves as Bhats or bards. If asked who they are they say "Jat-ka-bhat" "Jag Bhat," "Gujerati Bhat," "Kashi Bhat" or "Kumban Bhat."

14. According to the confessions of some Sansi dacoits their *modus operandi* is as follows:—

*Modus operandi.*

The gang usually halts about two days' journey from the scene of crime, and the leader accompanied by three or four smart women and some *sipahese* (clever men) taking some spear heads and bamboos with them, go to the place where they planned the dacoity or laid the *tak* according to their slang and bury their spears and bamboos in a certain place; and if there is any celebrated place of worship in the town, they first go to it and make *poojah*. They stay at the place for several days to ascertain who is the principal merchant, and find out the best roads to make their escape. When thus a victim is fixed,

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they take the liquor purchased and sprinkle a little on the ground in the name of Dèvi calling out "Oh *Dèvi* mother, if we succeed in our business, and get a good deal of booty, we will make a grand *poojah* to you and offer you a cocoanut." After this the Jamadar assigns to every man his particular duty, such as to keep watch, to guard the entrance leading to the place, to go inside the house and to light the torch quickly and he himself takes the axe with which the boxes are broken open. If the local Police arrangements are found to be good and they cannot get into the town with their spears in hand, they purchase some kunbee or long stalks of cholam and bujra, and hide their spears therein; and one man takes the bundle as if the bundle is for sale, and another man follows him to the place of dacoity. Should anyone enquire the price of the *kunbee* or cholam stalk, the man who is following it, says he has just bought it; when it is thrown down at the appointed spot, should anyone then wish to buy it, a very large price is asked for it. At an appointed signal, the bundle is cut and the torch is lighted. The torch is generally kindled at the place where the spears have been buried. They tie a number of stones into their kammarbunds keeping their bodies and feet naked, but not the heads over which cloths are wrapped and tied to prevent identification. Then the Jamadar invokes *Khundoba* of *Khande Rao* and with the torch-bearer rushes into the appointed shop or house calling out, "Din Din." Their watch word is "Lakharri Khan Bhai," by which they know each other. If any persons attempt to interrupt them, they are attacked. Those who remain outside, throw stones at anyone who may come near them. To prevent identification, they cut off and carry away the heads of those who are killed and their wounded comrades who cannot escape.

15. When in effecting their escape from the sphere of their operations they separate, anyone coming to a place where several roads meet, arranges some stones to show the direction to those of their accomplices who may be following. Finally they all join their original gang and bury the property till all the fuss about the case is over. The women left behind at

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the scene will of course be on their alert and be ready at a moment's notice for a move with them towards their gang.

16. In dealing with this tribe of Sansi-Kanjars, the Bengal Police records show that their women always resist the officers of justice in pursuit of their husbands and relatives, and keep them off by throwing dirt and even human excreta on them. Small articles of value are also, during a search, swallowed by the women or concealed in their vagina in which they make special "Saos" or receptacles by practice to admit of even a few rupees. Stolen property especially cash, is also concealed, in bedding and pack saddles, as also in bundles worn by women, so as to make them appear pregnant and in the *charpoy* (cot) legs which are hollow as cut for the purpose. The women try to deter pursuit and search by dashing their children on the ground. If seized when engaged in thieving, they effect their escape by squeezing blood out of bladders concealed about their persons and asserting that the violence of the attack made upon them has caused miscarriage. The ignorant villagers naturally get alarmed and let them go. The women frequent fairs and assemblies, where they pick pockets and steal ornaments from the persons of children. They and the girls dance in streets for alms and rob people who proffer them charity. They also disguise themselves and visit the residence of well-to-do ladies for gathering information and making observations for communication to the male members of the tribe who are pucka burglars.

Their women helping after crime.

17. Their house-breaking implements are like those of Bauris though sometimes a little different in shape, but these seem to possess a special instrument with a semi-circular end to remove easily any bolt or chain inside door ways. They invariably have a knife or two with the other implements.

Their implements of house-breaking.

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18. The women usually wear a colored petticoat and sometimes a sari. Their ears and noses are bored for ornaments. They wear necklaces, and on the breast Hindustani *cholis*. They are given to snatching ear-rings from sleeping women.

19. Even Sleeman so long ago as in 1845 found Sansis to have travelled over the whole of India. He found them in the Southern Mahratta country and in parts of the Madras Presidency. They were traced up to Poona, Hyderabad, Vizayanagaram and Kistna.

20. In the Kistna District, a Government Treasury guarded by a military party of a Naique and six privates of the 27th Madras Native Infantry was looted successfully at Ellore by Sansis about the year 1840.

21. In Punjab the members of the tribe were sent to the Reformatories till the end of 1867; this was declared illegal and crime immediately increased. It was afterwards found necessary a few years later to put into force Act XXVII of 1871. In spite of these measures the tribe still causes much trouble. In 1882 a gang started from Lahore, and taking rail for Delhi, managed to travel about 350 miles and commit nine dacoities during a short absence of eight days.

22. Dacoities and burglaries committed by this and the Bauri tribe all over India were not detected as they were supposed to have been committed by local criminals. About the year 1900, a gang of them committed a series of burglaries in the Godavery and Vizagapatam districts of the Madras Presidency. The cases were not known to have been committed by these so-called *Paradèsis* till one of them was arrested on suspicion by a Police Officer of the United Provinces and a confession was made describing many such burglaries committed by them in the Northern circars.

23. In 1903 three gangs of Kanjars were found wandering about with cattle in the District of Nasik under their leaders, Pahiria Mayum, Gangaram Chandu and Kikon Bhogu. There were 20 men, 21 women and many youngsters. The cattle

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stolen from all parts of the District by them was also recovered: and many of these men and women thus arrested were convicted.

24. About 1902 a large number of them were arrested for a series of dacoities committedb y Sansi-Kanjars in the Kurnul District and sent to the house of correction for long terms of imprisonment and some were even transported. They are known well in Northern India and are considered to be a very dangerous criminal tribe, but in the Southern Presidency they are little known to the Police and are therefore more successful passing themselves as innocent "Paradèsis" or Bairagees or Goshayis.

25. An offshoot of this Sansi tribe by the name of Oudhiya lives mainly in the Futtehpur District. They are to be found also in Jaunpur, Allahabad, Cawnpur and Hamirpur. They are notorious thieves and makers and passers of counterfeit-coins. Their mode of passing their counterfeit-coin is as follows:—

"One of the gang visits a village begging, and while doing so, asks for silver in exchange for copper which he has collected and offers seventeen annas for a rupee. When a rupee is given him, he examines it, and skilfully exchanging it for a counterfeit-coin, hands the latter back with some objection. This game is carried on as long as the dupe will produce genuine rupees."

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## CHAPTER III.

# CHAPPERBANDS.

CHAPPERBANDS or Fakir coiners have been giving much trouble all over India by making and passing counterfeit-rupees. They appear to have been following this dangerous profession even before preventive measures were adopted by the British Government. They seem to have learnt this art during the Moghul Period, but I cannot find any record about them previous to the enquiries made by Capt. Harvey who mentions them in his report to the Bombay Government 1850.* Their method of making and passing counterfeit-coins is what it was over half a century ago with little or no change. This energetic Police Officer of untiring zeal who worked under the guidance of Sir William Sleeman, also contributed brief notes on every other criminal tribe that was in his time in the Bombay Presidency.

2. Subsequent to Capt. Harvey several other Police Officers such as Messrs. Gunthrope, Alexander, Mullaly, Kottawala and many others have briefly written their history. According to the account given by the Superintendent of Police, Raipur, in 1904, and according to my personal enquiries about them, having lately arrested gangs of them in my own division, they now live in about 44 villages of Bagevadi Taluq and 20 villages of Muddebehal Taluq of the Bijapur District. When their census was taken by the District Superintendent of Police in 1893, there were 1,361 adults in both the Taluqs of whom 260 were absent, but in 1904 there were only 918 adults of whom 440 were absent. Though their number is on the decrease, the sphere of their operations is increasing. They used to confine themselves to the Bombay Presidency and the Nizam's Dominions, but now owing to

Their Settlements.

* His Note No. 271 of 1850.

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the rapid extension of the Railway communications, they are found in every Province of India including *Sind*. This fact is borne out by my personally seeing them in almost every jail in India while on special duty with Mr. Fawcett on special duty.

3. "Chapperbands, as their name implies, are, by profession, builders of roofs or, in a more general term, builders of huts. They are Sheikh Mahomedans and originally belonged to the Punjab, especially to the country surrounding Delhi. "During the Moghul invasion of the Carnatic as far back as 1687-88 a large number of them followed the great Moghul army as builders of huts for the men. They appear to have followed the Moghul army to Aurangabad, Ahmednagar and Serungapatam until the year 1714 when Bijapur passed into the hands of the Peshwas. The Chapperbands then formed part of the Peshwa's army in the same capacity and remained as such till the advent of the British in the year 1818, when it would appear a majority of them, finding their peculiar profession not much in demand, returned to the north; a part of those who remained behind passed into the Nizam's territory while a part settled down in the Province of Talikota.

Their origin and extension.

4. "The present Chapperband is a descendant of those who settled down in Talikota (converted into Muddebehal and Bagevadi since 1869). As far as a hundred years back the Chapperband took to his wandering exertions, first as an honest pedlar, latterly as a wandering mendicant, and lastly as a most confirmed maker and utterer of counterfeit coins."

5. A legendary tale narrated before the Superintendent of Police, Raipur, in January 1904, by an intelligent Chapperband, shows that they learnt this art of manufacturing coins during the Moghul Period. He said "In the time of the Moghul Empire Chapperbands settled in the Bijapur District. At that time a fakir named Pir Bhai Pir Makhan lived in the same District. One of the Chapperbands went to this

The origin of their profession.

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fakir and asked him to intercede with God in order that Chapperbands might be directed to take up some profession or other. The *fakir* gave the man a rupee and asked him to take it to his house quickly and not to look backwards as he proceeded on his way. As the man ran home, some one called him, and he turned round to see who it was. When he reached his house, he found the rupee had turned to a false one. The man returned to the *fakir* and complained that the rupee was a false one. The *fakir* was much enraged at the man's account of having looked back as he ran, but afterwards said that Chapperbands would make a living in future by manufacturing false coins. Since that time Chapperbands have become coiners of false money."

Their patron saints.

6. Another version given by some convicted Chapperbands recently is that they had two different patron saints named Pir Bhai and Pir Makhan, that it was they who initiated them in the art of manufacturing counterfeit-rupees, an art which is bound to be maintained as a secret. Their effigies are kept in a Makhan in a village in the Bagevadi Taluq of Bijapur District.

Their settlements in other Provinces.

7. In a recent confession before a brother officer of mine, an old convict of this class stated that many of them scattered themselves into Mysore, the Cuddapah District, the Nizam's Dominions and the Northern Circars, and settled there as innocent Mahomedans of the Sunni sect, giving up their coining profession and engaging in different avocations. They gained relationship with other local Mussalmans by intermarriages. Marriages between these scattered groups and the Chapperbands of Bijapur are permissible. This appears to be the cause of the decline of their number in their original places in Bijapur.

8. The spiritual priests of the community are said to be Gudan Sha Diwani of Dudhni and the Perzada of Sagar Shapur in His Highness the Nizam's Dominions. The latter priest is supposed to be a lineal descendant of one of the Pirs who have been mentioned.



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Sub-divisions.

9. The two main sub-divisions of the community seem to be "big turband" and "little turband," the latter the inferior. These do not intermarry, but each division is endogamous. Members of a gang may belong to either or both of these divisions, there being no restriction as to eating together or engaging in criminal operations. Children of other castes are sometimes adopted, but they cannot marry within the community. They are, however instructed in false coining.

Caste Government.

10. In each villiage where Chapperbands reside there is a headman (called by them Patel) who is the chief in all affairs of Caste Government, and who is supposed to play a useful part in relation with the official head of the village. Ordinary disputes seem to be settled by panchayet.

Their women and character.

11. An injunction of the patron saints was prohibition of sexual connection with women of other castes while away from home. The women must remain at home and the wandering Chapperbands must return to them. Then vows are discharged. The bond of union between the members of the community appears to be strong. It is seldom, if ever, that one Chapperband splits on another. Preservation of this bond is adduced as the reason for continuing complete separation from the other castes. Divorce is the penalty paid by the women for adultery within the community. The paramour defrays the expenses of the injured husband's second marriage which may amount to anything between 50 and 300 Rupees and the cost of a feast to the panchayat making the decision. Women so divorced cannot re-marry within the community. When the paramour happens to be an outsider the woman is not divorced, there being no means of enforcing payment for a second marriage. The women are gosha to outsiders but not to men of the community. They have nothing to do with the coining profession.

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12. In their villages the men cultivate fields, rear poultry and breed sheep, while the women make quilts which the men sell while on their tours in the neighbouring Taluqs or Districts. But their chief profession is to make and utter counterfeit-coins. Their women never accompany them in their wanderings. They profess to be Sunis of the Muhammedan religion but also follow a few Hindu customs, such as not eating beef, etc. They are fairly honest in their own district. They leave their homes generally after the rains in September or October and return before the Mohurrum. Generally the harvest season is preferred when all men are engaged in their fields busily, leaving the old women at home as they can generally find their victims among these latter.

Their profession at home and abroad.

13. They disguise themselves as Mahomedan fakirs with yellow, green or salmon coloured pagrees with the ends dangling at their backs and wear long jackets at times; they also wear glass and other kinds of beads round their necks and occasionally carry a black cocoanut shell in their hands. They are very polite in their manners and call every man a Data (giver) and every woman a Mahi (mother) in the villages. Their names generally end in *Shah* such as Imamshah and Muhammed Shah, but now they have begun to omit Shah at times, but they never give out the correct names and addresses.

Their disguises.

14. When Chapperbands are caught in the Madras Presidency, they profess to be fakirs of Hyderabad and when caught in Bengal or in the Northern India, they call themselves Bhatwali or Chatwali. They call themselves fakirs of the Order of Madaria. Sometimes they give out the names of the places in the Districts they previously visited as their native villages, especially those in which large shrines of Mussalmen exist such as Meerasaib of Nagoor, Bava Fakuruddin of Penugonda, Mowlali of Hyderabad and Sharif of Gulburga. They carry a leather bag or a thick cloth bag

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with a double fold so as to be carried easily on their shoulders.

Their usual baggage.

These bags have shelves in them and contain beside their culinary utensils, materials for making moulds and coins as will be in the sequel. They wear langoties or loin cloths in which there is a flap to conceal coins in.

15. Chapperbands like some other criminal tribes have faith in omens when they leave their country or when on their camping ground to proceed on a tour or a further march. If they hear a jackal howl, meet a dhobi, hear one sneeze, see a snake or scorpion, or a dog crosses their path at right angles, or if an earthen vessel belonging to them breaks, they will not start on their journey, or if they were intending to go in one direction, they will change their mind and go in another.

Their evil omens.

16. On every Sunday they collect all their false rupees and moulds and other implements and placing these in front of them, they worship Pir Makhan, also called Pir Madar their Guru. They sacrifice a fowl to him and take out its eyes and tail and fix them on three thorns of the trees Babul, Bir and Thalmakana : and after the worship is over, they throw them in the direction in which they intend to start.

Their worship.

17. Their gang consists of men and boys generally from 4 to 8 in number and one of them, an old and experienced man, is appointed leader, called *Khagdu*, whose orders are implicitly obeyed. Like the heads of other criminal gangs he receives a larger share of the earnings than the others. There is invariably a boy attached to every gang, called *Handiwal* and it is his duty to do the drudgery, such as bringing water, attending to any cattle belonging to the gang and keeping watch when the gang is coining counterfeit-rupees.

Their gang.

18. The Chapperbands often travel with a pony or two to carry their saman. They generally encamp on high ground, in a tope or in the shade of trees on the bund of a tank, in order that a good

Their encampments.

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look out may be kept around, and that water may be at hand into which false rupees and moulds may be thrown on any alarm. They thus encamp at about a mile or two from a village or town wherein they propose to pass their coins. The men who go into the villages or towns to pass the coins call themselves *Bhondars*.

Their implements, etc.

19. It is the duty of the leader to keep about his person when on the march, the earnings of the gang, the moulds, the white or yellow clay, the pieces of lead or tin, the sponge or cotton, the spoon, the tongs, the soapnuts, the scales, the gum, the file, the flint, the iron rings, the spoon, the knife and the pincers, these being the requisite articles for moulding their coins. Sometimes some of these are absent. He never carries the false rupees. This is the work of the *Bhondars*. He generally rides a pony and is accompanied by the boy, and usually does not travel more than five or six miles a day. When he starts, the Bhondars depart in different directions to visit the surrounding villages and they all meet again in the afternoon at the camping ground agreed upon beforehand.

Their watchfulness in camps.

20. When the leader reaches the place where he is going to camp, his first duty is to bury the earnings somewhere close by, and the moulds, if any, are hidden in grass or among bushes more than 100 yards off. When the Bhondars join him they also hide their false rupees in the same way. It is for this reason that in almost all the cases recently detected, only the articles or implements used in making moulds have been seized but not the moulds or coins. Where the coins were seized there were neither moulds nor implements to be found. They take special care that both the moulds and coins are not seized together. In many cases only the preventive sections of the Criminal Procedure Code have been applied with a view to binding them over for good behaviour. It is rare that they are convicted of manufacturing coins with moulds. During the last five or six years many of these were arrested on different Railways but only with their earnings

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and implements. Chapperbands returning from Bengal seem to carry more earnings than those from other Provinces, each man carrying about 300 Rupees on an average as the recent captures at Secunderabad, Vizianagram and Bezwada showed. The Superintendent of Police, Raipur, suggested that as these coiners generally return a month before the Mohurrum, they should be watched at Manmar, Sholapur, Hotgi, Chandragiri and Armatti where they could be easily arrested before they reached their homes, with their earnings, though of course, with no false coins or moulds in their possession.

Their moulds.

21. The moulds are made of soft clay of a brown or light-yellowish colour. One of the coiners admitted before me that he picked up this mud from the rocky banks of the Tungabhadra river. It consists of the powder of the soft stone washed off by the current of the river. This mud they call "Sidee Pait-Muttee." When questioned by the Police or the Magistrates, they say it is "Gopichundan" to mark their foreheads with, though they profess to be Mussalmans. Their manufacture of moulds also is very simple. They make two flat round pieces of wet mud and press a genuine rupee between them and tap all round with a flat piece of wood to take the impression properly. A cut is then made through these two pieces going all round the edge of the rupee so that they may not be mixed up. A small hole is made on a side of the mould to admit of the melted metal being poured in. Marks are made across in two or three places or thorns are fixed in such places so that the two sides of the mould are correctly placed when ready. The mould is now tied with rags and coated again with mud. The mould is then baked till it gets sufficiently hard. The outer layer of mud is then removed. The mould is opened and the genuine rupee removed. The two pieces of the mould are stuck together by gum and are tied up again with cotton and rags and it is then complete. The melted substance is poured in. The counterfeit-rupee is now formed. After a little use of the knife and file for polishing and milling, the rupee is ready.

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To give it a shining exterior soapnuts are used in washing and at times some chemical fluid to brighten it temporarily.

Their special guiding signs.

22. The Chapperbands have a way of communicating to each other the road they have taken. If one of the gang arrives at a branch road, he makes a mud heap on the side of the road he is taking, a foot long, six inches broad and six inches high and draws an arrow in front of it showing the direction taken. Three such mud heaps are made at intervals of over 100 yards in order that if one is obliterated another may remain. Sometimes branches of trees are placed below some stones showing direction. If they want to show that they still exist in the locality, they sketch a fish or a hand in charcoal on a wall in public view.

Their slang.

23. Some of the slang words used by Chapperbands in their profession, ("Farsi") as is usual with every criminal tribes have been noted by some experienced officers during their enquiries.

| | |
|---|---|
| Leader ... | ... Khagada or Baitnara. |
| Passers of coins ... | ... Bhondars. |
| Boy with the gang | ... Handiwal. |
| Boy ... | ... Nandana or Londana. |
| Girl ... | ... Londia. |
| Daughter ... | ... Dhi. |
| Adopted child ... | ... Palak Gulam. |
| Wife ... | ... Mheri. |
| Father-in-law ... | ... Sasur. |
| Father ... | ... Bapu. |
| Mother ... | ... Ayyi. |
| Woman ... | ... Astri. |
| Brother ... | ... Dada. |
| Marriage ... | ... Biha. |
| Stranger ... | ... Namta. |
| European ... | ... Gora. |
| Rupee (genuine) | ... Thairi. |
| Rupee (false) ... | ... Agoo or Agoopana. |

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| | |
|---|---|
| Copper money ... | ... Thiara. |
| Lead ... | ... Kain. |
| Mould ... | ... Kham, Pot. |
| Make false rupees | ... Kham Baniya Likkia. |
| Conceal ... | ... Gumaloo. |
| Runaway ... | ... Tabbajo or Towajo. |
| Runaway at night | ... Gemi set wago. |
| Arrested ... | ... Tekolin. |
| Iron spoon ... | ... Palli. |
| Sharp knife for milling | ... Rappatni. |
| Hide rupees in rectum | ... Badlam Karlay. |
| Gold ... | ... Bonah. |
| House ... | ... Donk. |
| Road ... | ... Renda. |
| Village ... | ... Nand. |
| Police post ... | ... Navadi, Gatee. |
| Constable ... | ... Khapparala, Kutha, Gadha, Chibada. |
| Clay used for moulds | ... Chimti. |
| A party on tour | ... Mandal-Gholari. |

Some of these words are supposed to be unknown to the women of the community.

24. Their ways of passing coins are manifold. The most usual way is as follows:—They look out for old women and simple people of moderate means in the town or village or wait near some weekly fairs and offer 16½ or 16¼ annas of copper for a rupee telling them that they had collected the copper coins while begging. When the woman or simpleton pays them a rupee and begins to count the copper coins, the Chapperband by sleight of hand, replaces his false rupee concealing the genuine one and complains that the one given by the villager did not sound well. When another is given he does the same. In a case convicted by the Sessions Judge of Kistna in January 1906, a Fakir coiner was found to have been able to pass three lead rupees thus on an old avaricious Komati woman at one and the same time in the middle of Bezwada town. They also substitute counterfeit-rupees while making purchases in shops by picking up quarrels wantonly with the shopkeepers and while returning rupees.

Their usual victims.

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Their search.

25. When a Police Officer receives a complaint that a Mussalman fakir has been caught passing a false coin, his person including the mouth and the rectum should be examined carefully, then his clothes, and especially his langoti with pockets in it. Immediately about half a dozen constables with an officer should proceed to the places of resort of the description given in the previous paragraph and they will surely find a gang within two miles from the spot. On reaching the spot, every man and boy should be taken by surprise and made to sit without being allowed to meddle with their things, handcuffing them all if possible. Then their persons and the saman including their furnaces should be searched as also any places showing signs of new burials within 200 yards all round. They conceal a large number of rupees in the rectum, long misusage often forming a cavity capable of containing 10 to 20 Rupees. So also cavities are formed in the mouths below the tongue. If no moulds or rupees are found they will at least find some of the materials mentioned before. Evidence should be collected from the people moving about in the fields in the vicinity as to their connection with the man who has been arrested passing the coin and who must have been with them before going into the village.

Nature of their coins.

26. The coins made by this tribe are of a poor make, easily flexible, smooth to the touch, light in weight sometimes so low as 12 or 10 annas in weight and dull in sound with crude milling. It is not likely that the currency is affected by the coins made by this tribe. The Bombay Government has however ordered that Regulation No. XII of 1827 should be brought into force with regard to this tribe and notices are being issued to every male member above 12 years of age to bind them over to their own District. I have thus no doubt that in a very short time, we will see the salutary effect of this regulation.

Application of Reg. XII of 1827.



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"*Notice under Section 27 of Bombay Regulation XII of 1827.*

No.

To

Son of

Resident of

Whereas in the interests of the public peace and order it is desirable to keep a watch over your movements, the following instructions are hereby issued to you :—

(*a*) You are required to attend roll-call three times a week on such days and at such place as may be from time to time decided by the District Superintendent of Police, whether such roll-call be called by a Patel or Kulkarni of your village or by a member of the District Police Force.

(*b*) You are forbidden to leave the limits of your village without the permission in writing of the Police Patel of your village. Such permission shall state the period for which you intend to absent yourself from your village, the place you propose to visit and the purpose of your visit.

(*c*) And you are hereby warned that in the event of your failing at any time to comply with any order given above, or if you absent yourself from your village beyond the period covered by the permission granted under clause (*b*), or if you are found in any town or village other than that which you are permitted to visit, you render yourself liable to be punished with simple imprisonment for a period not exceeding six months.

*Rules under Section 27 of Bombay Regulation XII of 1827.*

"The following orders are issued under Section 27 of Bombay Regulation XII of 1827.

2. The Police Patel of every village in which Chapperbands reside shall keep a book of passes in a given form, with two counterparts of the form.

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"3. On a Chapperband intimating to the Patel his wish to leave the village, the requisite particulars shall be filed in the pass-form as well as the two counterparts. The original shall be retained by the Patel in the book, the first of the two counterparts being given to the Chapperband concerned, and the second being sent to the officer in charge of the Police post within whose jurisdiction the village which the pass-holder intends to visit is situated: provided such village is not situated beyond the limits of the taluka in which the pass-holder habitually resides. If the pass-holder proposes to visit a village beyond the limits of his taluka, the Patel shall send the second counterpart to the Chief Constable of his own taluka. On receipt from the Patel of the counterpart of the pass, the Chief Constable shall forward it to the Chief Constable of the taluka in which the pass-holder intends to reside, who in turn shall send it to the officer in charge of the post under which the village is located. The officer in charge of the post to whom the counterpart of the pass is forwarded and their subordinates shall follow the procedure prescribed in Rules 5, 6, 7 and 8.

"4. It shall be the duty of the holder of a pass arriving at the village for which the pass has been issued to show it to the Police Patel, who will endorse on it the date of presentation.

"5. Officers in charge of Police posts shall keep a separate file for passes forwarded to them, and shall immediately on their receipt acquaint the men under them at the post of their substance and direct them, when visiting villages for which passes have been granted, to ascertain whether the pass-holders are present. If they are in the village, the patrolling constables shall endorse the passes to that effect and make corresponding entries in their own patrol books under the appropriate date.

"6. In the event of a pass-holder not being found at the village for which a pass is granted, the Police officer who visits the village shall [illegible] record the statements of the village officers as to his absence

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"7. These statements shall be forwarded with a report to the Chief Constable of the taluka, who shall, unless good and sufficient grounds can be shown for his absence, prosecute the pass-holder when found.

"8. Police Patels shall examine their pass-books from time to time and as soon as they find that a pass-holder has absented himself beyond the period for which a pass has been granted to him, they shall inform the Head Constable of the post under which their village is located or the Chief Constable of the taluka if the pass has been granted for a village outside the taluka, as the case may be. Head Constables and constables patrolling villages should similarly examine Patels' pass-books and a report to the Chief Constable by the Head Constable of the post should at once be made regarding any such absentee.

"9. The Patels' pass-books shall also be checked by Chief Constables when travelling in their talukas, and any negligence in giving effect to the orders embodied in the foregoing rules which they may discover should be immediately reported to the Superintendent of Police."

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## CHAPTER IV.

### CABULEES, KHANDARIES, PATANS, ROHILLAS OR PESHAWARIES.

Their origin.

THESE terms are used for the foreigners who hail chiefly from Afghanistan and from the independent states of Swat, Bejour, Buneir and others lying between Afghanistan and the Punjab of the British India. Most of them who settle in the Punjab and other parts of India as merchants are no doubt honest and trustworthy in their dealings. Some of them have settled here and there all over the country. But there are others who roam about all over India with the dishonest intention of plundering and often succeed in carrying away large booty by trains and over seas. In Guzerat and some portions of Northern India the Cabulees are divided into two distinct sects—the Peshawaries and the Vilayathis. It is only the former that are a bad lot, the latter being plain honest traders. In some places they are called Patans while in some others Rohillas, Peshawaries or Cabulees.

Their appearance.

2. They are naturally tall, stout and strong; they are generally fair, having been born in a cold country. They grow their hair of the head till it reaches the neck and then crop. They also generally grow their beards with a motive to pass themselves as pious men. In proportion to their stalwart frames they require greater nutrition than the puny people of the South who are scorched in the sun; their living is, therefore, more costly.

Their ostensible profession.

3. They move about ostensibly as dealers in "Mewa," which constitute "Salamisiri," "Saphethmisiri," dried figs, grapes, "Akrot," "Pistham" and other articles of tonic properties, or as dealers in asafœtida. They also hawk about different kinds of cloths and shawls in bundles and sell trinkets, German-silver articles, watches and chains of small

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value. They also deal in horses and elephants which bring them often considerable profit as Zemindars or Rajas are the usual emptors in such cases. They also go about whetting knives or working in the construction of bridges of Railways. Thus they move about making acquaintance with the local budmashes and settle themselves in some convenient towns or villages. Then the first thing they do is to study the topography of the houses and shops of the rich and of the temples. After some successful campaign, say, one or two burglaries, they marry or keep a local woman of the place. Having thus secured some *locus standi*, they purchase or hire a house and open a nominal shop and begin some trade to belie the local Police and the public that they are merchants. They gradually give shelter to other new comers and form themselves into a gang. A few others take up work in a proposed construction of new branches of Railways and pass themselves off as contractors or workmen of some respectability. They also commit thefts, burglaries, and dacoities whenever convenient, and often cheat and extort money from any artless and unsuspecting neighbours who may come in contact with them. They also gamble in important towns and villages often with the connivance of the Police constables on duty. Those that sell trinkets, watches, chains and false stones of paltry value, move about India, and visit such gangs periodically to afford facilities for their brethren to dispose of their stolen property in places far off from the scenes of offence often in other Provinces and Native States. As an illustration I give an instance in which I purchased a false-stone watch chain on the platform of Viramgam, a Railway station in Guzerat from a Cabulee who had visited Madura, Trichinopoly and Madras a month previous to that. This I did while I was moving in Kathiawar with my superior, Mr. F. Fawcett, on special duty in 1904 under the orders of the Central Criminal Intelligence Department. This Cabulee had a follower and a servant boy with him while travelling in train all over Kathiawar, putting on an appearance too respectable to be suspected by an ordinary constable.

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Their equivocal communications.

4. When they get convicted at a place or a place gets too hot for them, they go away to another unless they are tied or bound by families, houses and shops. Though they are far away from each other, they freely make use of the Post Office and occasionally the Telegraph. They keep a regular correspondence, often using peculiar and equivocal expressions which are not understood by others to whom they convey a different meaning from that actually denoted by them. In one case in 1893 I seized certain postal cards, letters and telegrams at Guntakul from the members of a gang settled not far from the Town Police station of Trichinopoly. The following were among others the expressions used in the telegrams: "Has the cow given a calf." "Is the she-buffalo milking properly." "Has the bull been bargained." These telegrams were despatched by a Cabulee from Trichinopoly to Thimmaucherla, a small station near Guntakul Junction, where another Cabulee had been living. The meaning of these expressions will be referred to later on in narrating a cheating case committed in 1893 a few days subsequent to the dates of these wires. A full report of these facts was sent by me to Col. Porteous, the then famous Inspector-General of Police.

Their field of operation.

5. Some of this class first attempted to make their fortune in the Bombay and Madras Presidencies by breaking into shops and houses, but not finding it well paying, they diverted their attention to the temples of Southern India which are proverbial for their wealth and plenty, consisting of the old and valuable jewels used to decorate the idols on important festive occasions. With a view to get an insight into the nature and repository of such property of each of the important Hindu shrines whereto they have no admittance being "Mlechas," they take some bad characters of Guzerat and Northern India who are Hindus into their confidence and through them study about each shrine and its jewels and the place wherein they are secured. Need it be said that

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the ever greedy and the beggarly *Poojaries* and *Kurukkals* show them the places yielding naturally to the temptations before them?

Their mode of settling.

6. When they first arrive at a spot as "Mewa" or asafœtida sellers, they appear in their usual loose dirty trousers and jackets and huge turbans, but when they reside in a place tolerably long, they take to dressing like a refined Mussalman and in a few years try to pass themselves off as local Mussalmans wearing their ordinary apparel. Very often they settle themselves permanently in a place if they happen to have formed intimacy with any local women who may bear them children. Some of them whose standard of morality is very low have women in their keep in two or three places in different provinces and live with each of them for some time by turns.

Changing names.

7. When they first arrive they give their real names and villages, but as the Police begin to record their names and descriptions, they change them very often, giving the names of the villages in India they have visited as their native places.

Property in temples.

8. There is not the slightest doubt that the temples in Southern India, *i.e.*, the Madras Presidency including Mysore and the Southern portion of the Bombay Presidency, do still possess much wealth and jewels as they had not been frequented by the Mogul or Moslem Kings who plundered the temples of Northern India; but these Cabulees have found out this truth by their complicity with the local people and have aimed at these temples as their important resort. Even if the temples of the Madras Presidency should lose their jewels, they are replaced by pilgrims and devotees thereto. The dark Madrassee, I beg his pardon, is more fond of adorning himself and his family often with jewels of great value than his brethren in other parts of India. If

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is perhaps to make up for their want of natural beauty, being scorched up by the greater heat of the tropical climate to which they are exposed. Having travelled all over India, I find that the Madras Chetty with his gold bangles and chains on his wrists, which are getting bigger day by day, stands alone though I have seen the women of Guzerat and Northern India, naturally gifted with beauty as they are, fettering their feet with huge silver anklets. These, I learn, are worn to make the women more modest in walking as they are bolder in their bearing than their sisters in the South.

Sholinger temple burglary.

9. Turning now to the subject, I next give certain important instances which will exemplify their operations.

In 1890 when the branch of the South Indian Railway was under construction near Vellore, one Beharam Khan *alias* Nur Khan settled there : some Cabulees temporarily settled at Nandyal, Gooty, Bangalore and Hubli formed themselves into a gang under the leadership of Beharam Khan.

This Beharam Khan, having stayed long at Vellore, had studied the nature and topography of the Sholinger temple. When at Vellore he called himself Nur Khan. They found a trustworthy confederate in a Marwadi named 'Pandat' and the latter was used as their informant. He opened a sweetmeat shop at a very high rent close to the temple. The gang pitched up their camp in a mango garden near Vellore whose gardener happened to be a Mussalman. The 'Pandat' was making and selling sweetmeats at his shop and every night used to visit the idol with a cocoanut and liberal "*Dakshina*" of two annas while others pay only half-an-anna. He worshipped the idol with affected fervour by prostrations and other formalities. The avaricious *Poojari* much pleased with this Marwadi's liberality and piety pointed out the places in the temple where the jewels and cloths had been secured. The Cabulees used to visit the sweetmeat



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shop during nights as if to make purchases and learn all the particulars of the doors, boxes and walls of the temple. A very dark night, *viz.*, the 14th August, 1890, was fixed. A few days prior to this memorable day the 'Pandat' was not found. The sweetmeat shop was closed. On the appointed night about 12 Cabulees who had encamped at the mango garden broke open the strong iron hasps and chains of the inner door by crowbars and effected entrance into the innermost shrine of the temple and quietly stole all the property to the value of over Rs. 30,000 and successfully made away with it to their places. They also set fire to the *Pitambar* (silk cloth) of the idol in their joy. The next morning the local Police, who had not the faintest idea either of the temporary existence and disappearance of the pious Marwadi Brahmin and of his shop or of the frequent visits of the Cabulee friends, arrested all the Poojaries and obtained their remand. The Superintendent of Police and the Magistrate all held personal enquiries but to no effect. It was only three months afterwards, when a discontented Cabulee gave out the real clue that the eyes of the Police were opened, though in vain.

10. Cabulees settled in Hubli, Mysore and Bangalore together with their friends settled in other places conspired together in a small tope about a mile from the Hubli town and planned the following two cases of heavy house-breaking. They split into two parties and went in different directions to Cape Comorin and to Kollur in South Canara.

Cape Comorin and Kollur cases.

In May 1894 two of the richest temples, one at Cape Comorin and the other at Kollur in South Canara, were broken into. The entrance into the former was effected without the knowledge of the sepoys on the sentry and into the latter by force in a conflict. In all over four lakhs worth of property was stolen from both the temples, including two large emeralds of antiquity preserved from time immemorial.

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11. The Cape Comorin temple is a large one and stands at the southernmost point of the Cape almost jutting out into the junction of the Arabian sea and the Bay of Bengal. It is a very strong temple surrounded by high walls impregnable as a fortress. The inner portion of the temple is inaccessible except through the narrow passage on the side of the sacred pillar the "Dwajastambam." The party that went to the Cape scaled over the outer walls on a side of the temple avoiding the sentry and got into the temple through the passage. They then by means of big drills made holes around the hasps of bolts as to admit the passage of hands. They then effecting entrance made away with the whole property valued over a lakh of rupees and walked over a distance of about 30 miles right into the chain of hills in the Nanganeri Taluq of the Tinnevelly district. There they made a halt to have their booty divided. While they were examining their booty at leisure in the heart of the hills hitherto untrodden by human feet, unfortunately for them a gang of Marawa dacoits on their way to commit a dacoity in a certain village halted at a short distance from them. Two of them were sent to fetch provisions in a village at the foot of the ghâts where they saw the gang of Cabulees with their booty. These two Marawars informed the rest of their gang which numbered upwards of forty and all of them surrounded the Cabulees and attacked them. A fight ensued between the Marawars fresh from their homes and the Cabulees much fatigued. The former, fresh as they were, vanquished the latter and carried away about Rs. 15,000 worth of their booty, killing one and wounding three or four others. The Cabulees then decamped and ran in different directions. Two of them were arrested with about Rs. 5,000 worth of property at the Tanjore Railway Station but the rest joined their other contingent at Hubli, their headquarters.

Cape Comorin temple.

12. In the meanwhile, the other contingent which had gone to Kollur in Canara committed dacoity in the temple of Mukambica which was also guarded besides being surrounded by a strong wall.

Kollur temple.

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I am not in full possession of the details of this case but I know the culprits carried away successfully all the property including two precious emeralds estimated at about two lakhs of Rupees. When escaping with the property, they were fired at but to no effect. Immediately some of the culprits were arrested and the rest made away with the property to Hubli, Mysore, Bangalore. The leaders of the gang joined the first contingent, a few days after, at Hubli. The local Police of Hubli got scent of this and recovered some property and arrested a few of the leading culprits. At Hubli, the rendezvous of these Cabulees is a convenient tope with a well by the side of a water Nulla at about a mile from the village as stated above. It was there that they, seeing the activity of the Police, buried the property in several places in small portions. But the major portion was *safely* buried in a place allotted by all of them for the purpose.

13. While the Police were thus engaged, the Travancore Government sought the help of Col. Porteous, the Inspector-General of Madras Police, and he at once deputed a few inspectors including myself. Arrest of the culprits and recovery of property secured in small quantities were immediately made.

Recovery of property.

14. Fortunately for the two temples and unfortunately for the offenders, the fact of the burial of the property was known to one Zerdathkhan who was related to one of them but who had no share in the crime. This man, without the knowledge of the rest, removed the whole property to some other place and after a few days secured the whole property in a round tin case covering it with wheat flour up to its brim and travelled safely up to Rawalpindi, without being suspected by any Police. But at Rawalpindi very near his place of destination in Swat, a Patan Police Constable suspected him and wanted to examine the box which had been locked. Zerdathkhan defied the constable and boldly said that it was *Attah*, meaning flour. The intelligent constable questioned as to why a flour box should be so

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securely locked. Then examining the flour deep, the property to the extent of over two lakhs including the two precious emeralds were found. The man and the property were immediately placed before the local Superintendent of Police who wired to the Inspector-General of Police, Madras. Myself and another Inspector were sent to Rawalpindi to bring the accused and the property to Madras. They were brought. On further search, some other property was also found at Hubli and after investigation of the two cases in which the property recovered was concerned and after arresting many in Bangalore and Mysore, some of the accused were convicted by the Sessions Courts of Nagercoil and Canara, while others were discharged for want of proper evidence.

A nice point for police consideration.

15. It may not be out of place here to mention that the Marawars from whom some of the stolen property had been recovered, of course on inducements and promises, were cited as witnesses against the Cabulees to identify some of the Cabulees whom they robbed in the hills; but, to my great regret, they were finally convicted of receiving stolen property, having been charged by the Nagercoil Inspector under orders of Mr. E. S. B. Stevenson, who was then the District Officer. Here is a delicate point of Law for my co-officers to consider and study. The Marawars, no doubt a criminal class, were on an errand to commit a dacoity in a certain village. If they had not robbed these Cabulees of their stolen property, certainly the case would have been left undetected. All the 14 Marawars no doubt committed the offence of dacoity or receiving stolen property. But having taken them as witnesses and made them depose to several facts against their own interests to strengthen the prosecution of the original case, it looks unfair that they should be charged with receiving stolen property.

Their raids in Mysore.

16. An attempt was made by the Cabulees of Mysore and Bangalore in 1903 to loot the temple of Chamarajendrapett near Mysore with the help of old Banket, a corrupted Marwadi. They did not

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succeed as the Police who watched their frequent movements by rail found house-breaking implements concealed in a hand stick with them. They were all bound over for good behaviour for three years. While writing these notes in July 1907, another dacoity was committed in a temple at Tumkur by Cabulees all clothed in kaki uniform so early as between 8 and 9 P.M. Though the culprits carried away property valued about 5,000 rupees yet they had the kindness to throw away the gold idol when pursued perhaps thinking it was not of gold.

17. Many other burglaries and dacoities were committed in the temples of the Ganjam, Chingleput, North Arcot, Tanjore and Madura districts and the Mysore State. Though I know the details of some of them; I do not think it necessary to dilate on all such cases of the Madras Presidency and as they are not so very important as two others, the latest ones that occurred, one in the Bombay Presidency and the other in the Portuguese Dominions. They are the Kholapur dacoity and the Goa dacoity. The following is an extract from the letter of the Superintendent of Police, Dharwar, dated March, 1898:—

1 Kallikota Temple.
2 Conjeevaram Temple.
3 Thirukadayur Temple.
4 Alagar Temple (Madura).
5 Palni Temple (Madura).
6 Melukota Temple
7 Tumkur Temple and many others.

Kowley dacoity.

"On the night of the 22nd January, 1898, the temple of Kowley, situated in the Goa territory, was looted by a gang of about 80 Khandaries (Pathans) armed with 6 guns and revolvers. After re-crossing the border into British territory, the gang broke up and retired in parties to Belgaum, Dharwar, Hubli, Bankapur, Bangalore, Savanur and Mysore. The Belgaum detachment went *viâ* Tinaighat, Bhurrelkhod, Lorda, Khanapur, Siroli, etc. The Hubli party returned *viâ* Canara jungles, Alnawar, Mugad, Dharwar, etc. Both parties reached their destinations on the 25th idem. The Bangalore and Mysore detachments took train at Yelvigi and Castle Rock, reaching their destinations about the 31st idem or the 3rd February following or even later than those who stopped at Bankapur and Savanur on the way."

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"On the night of the 3rd February, 1898, the Hubli contingent was secured numbering 39 and with some was found property belonging to the Goa temple."

Some ten more were arrested subsequently and tried along with the others. Many of the above were convicted and sentenced to long terms of imprisonment.

18. As they seemed to be the bad characters of the Bombay and Madras Presidencies, their names may be useful to the Police officers of both the presidencies, if not to those of other Provinces to which also they frequently move. Their names (with those of their fathers) are :—

1. Sultan Khan Walad Feroze Khan.
2. Saiyid Jan Walad Saiyid Hakim.
3. Madar Khan Walad Hajrat Khan.
4. Mirabjul Walad Monin Khan.
5. Amirjad Walad Akbar Khan.
6. Karimullah Khan Walad Mommin Khan.
7. Gulam Rasul Walad Muhammad Umar.
8. Shidikh Walad Latif Khan.
9. Akhtar Muhammad Walad Amirullah Khan.
10. Akbar Shah Worf Mia Walad Hajaratsha.
11. Saiyid Ahmed Walad Mir Ahmed Khan.
12. Saiyid Karim Walad Saiyid Umar.
13. Saiyid Nawab Walad Muhammad Jemal.
14. Jangun Shah Walad Fathi Shah.
15. Amir Knan Walad Jeshin Khan.
16. Bram Khan Walad Saiyid Muhammad Khan.
17. Ali Muhammad Worf Haji Walad Aminsha.
18. Mursalan Khan Walad Shamraf Khan.
19. Masum Walad Sherib Khan.
20. Janbaz Khan Walad Khan baz Khan.
21. Rambaz Khan Walad Dade Khan.
22. Yashin Khan Walad Dade Khan.
23. Khan Ahmed Walad Yar Muhammad.
24. Thorab Khan Walad Sheerdal Khan.
25. Adal Shah Walad Adam Shah.
26. Sahib Shah Walad Momin Shah.

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27. Ajabnur Walad Amirjad.
28. Sherib Khan Walad Mir Ahmed Khan.
29. Nimbullah Khan Walad Muhammad Amir.
30. Sherdalli Khan Walad Khavrerang.
31. Abdul Rahiman Walad Gul Saiyid Khan.
32. Musa Khan Walad Ate Khan.
33. Mallung Khan Walad Aurang Khan.
34. Mairab Khan Walad Jum Khan.
35. Shaikh Muhammad Walad Sultan Khan.
36. Abdul Khan Walad Muhammad Khan.
37. Amin Khan Walad Ghul Saiyid Khan.
*38. Lal Chand Walad Kushal Chand.
*39. Ram Chand Walad Kadam Chand.

Since then 6 men have been arrested, names as follow, making 45 in all ;—

1. Gulam Mohiuddin Walad Shah Ahmed.
2. Hasim Walad Basir Sab.
3. Rusthum Khan Walad Dargel Khan.
4. Amiruddin Walad Jamaluddin.
5. Marun Walad Hassan Shah.
6. Abdul Aziz Walad Sadid Khan.

Kholapur dacoity.

19. One more case of dacoity and I will have done. At Hubli, these Cabulees have many receivers in the local shroffs and in one rich shopkeeper a Mussalman of Hyderabad, a shopkeeper whose name I purposely omit because of his respectable parentage. This last Mussalman was helping them with money whenever they were in trouble. When three of them were arrested by me on the Kristna Bridge, with housebreaking implements in 1896 at Bezwada, this shopkeeper came all the way from Hubli and engaged Vakils for their defence. Two years afterwards this shopkeeper arranged a dacoity with the Hubli gang in the Kholapur State in the Bombay Presidency in the following manner. He went to Bombay and arranged with the jewel merchants there to bring various valuable jewels to the Rajah of Kholapur stating that the Rajah had wanted them. The merchants took

* Nos. 38 and 39 are Hindu associates of Cabulees.

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about a lakh of rupees worth of jewels and accompanied the shopkeeper who always used to put on the appearance of a Nawab himself, always travelling 2nd-class on Railways. About ten Cabulees of the gang were made to wait in the way close to Kholapur. As the carriage of the merchants with the shopkeeper was approaching Kholapur, the gang attacked them causing injuries to the merchants but not to the shopkeeper. The Police made enquiries and seeing that the Rajah never ordered the shopkeeper for such jewels, arrested him with some of the gang and had all of them sentenced to long terms of imprisonment. The respectable shopkeeper also got five years in his turn.

20. These Pathans are treated as Criminal tribes in some of the provinces in the North and in Guzerat. While I was making enquiries about the Pathans of Guzerat where they are settled in large numbers, I heard that a gang of them had lately committed a torchlight dacoity not far from Ahmedabad and looted about 1,000 rupees worth of property pinioning the shoulders of the master of the house to a pillar and inflicting wounds to some others. They commit highway and house dacoities all over Guzerat, the Central Provinces and Hyderabad (Deccan). They are scattered here and there all over India.

21. I now give an instance of their swindling. They first ascertain who are the notorious receivers of stolen property of a place and make acquaintance with one of them who can command money in hundreds and thousands. They quietly make him understand that they have large quantities of stolen property concerned in such and such cases of which the receiver must have heard. They offer to sell gold at 15 rupees a tolah to him if he should bring two or three thousand rupees as they have a large quantity. The receiver, of course, with a desire to be enriched all at once, yields to buy but asks the Cabulees to show him the property first. The Cabulees readily consent to do so and they take him to

Their mode of cheating.



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a spot in a jungle and show him the buried vessel containing gilt jewels of brass of refined make of the South. They also have some two or three gold jewels of small value. They take out these genuine jewels and test them on a touch stone showing the other gilt jewels of all kinds in the vessel. They take care always to show him the jewels in the dusk of the evening or in the nights on the pretext of their being discovered by the Police or the villagers. The next or third day they invite the receiver to go to the spot on a certain night with the money and have the jewels weighed in a scale. In the meanwhile the Cabulees engage two Policemen, if they yield for 25 or 30 rupees each, to be at a certain spot close to the place; and when they signal by coughing or by a light, the Policemen run to the spot. When the receiver with another companion or two arrives at the spot with the money, the Cabulees who will be no less than four or five will be on their alert to find how they can best snatch away the bundle of rupees or the money purse. One of them will be engaged in removing the vessel of jewels. The receiver will be asked to sit down to weigh the jewels. Naturally the money must be kept down. On a signal from one of them the two appointed Policemen will run towards them and the Cabulees will snatch away the money and the vessel and take to heels never to appear again. The receiver returns home crying but without any complaint to make for fear that he will be registered as a condemned receiver of stolen property. If they cannot gain over the local Police, two of the gang disguise themselves as Police and act in the manner shown above. In a case in the Ceded Districts, a goldsmith was cheated to the extent of 2,500 rupees. A knowledge of these facts served me well when I kept under watch in the Railway Station of Guntakul and arrested three of the Trichinopoly gang, seizing the property of the goldsmith and a bundle of letters and telegrams couched in equivocal language. I learnt from one of them subsequently that the words "Has the cow given

Policemen hired.

Equivocal telegrams.

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a calf" mean if he had succeeded in cheating the dupe of the receiver. Similarly the meaning of "Is the she buffalo milking properly" is whether he has been negotiating with the receivers to purchase the property. The others enquired what progress he has made in the nefarious transaction. Among the letters it may be interesting to note that I found some written by a European lady in pretty good English and some from a Barrister engaged to defend one of the gang in the Bhavani (Coimbatore District) house-breaking case in the Madras High Court. I then started enquiries and learnt that the leader of the gang named Lalla, since hanged for a murder, had been keeping an European prostitute whom he met at Poona near the military quarters and that she was kept in Gosha in a building not far from the Town Police station of Trichinopoly. Then some more cases of cheating were traced and proved against three of the gang and all were convicted.

An European woman in their keep.

22. Some of these Cabulees who migrate into Bengal, the Bombay and Madras Presidencies are either convicts in the Punjab or are closely connected with such people. Fearing they would be exposed to shame, they emigrate to other parts. A man named Spin Miyan belonging to a family in which three brothers were hanged and the fourth transported for life for the murder of a Kaka Kheyl of their village near Nowshera in 1882, passed himself as a respectable priest of the Cabulees for some time and then as a Railway cooly on the Kistna bridge at Bezwada. He opened a prayer house at Seetanagaram for the Patans working on the Kistna bridge in 1892 and acted as their Kazi. But after all, in the same year he was suspected in a dacoity case in Godavery and in 1895 was bound over for good behaviour by the special Assistant Agent of Koraput. Similarly men convicted in the Madras Presidency have left for Northern India.

Disguise as Kazi.

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Smuggling firearms.

23. These Patans often carry or send firearms to their Maliks in the independent states clandestinely concealing them in beds, bundles and bales booked. They are so fond of these English firearms that they often purchase at double or treble their usual price. In 1888 a large quantity of arms and ammunition were sent in goods bales by train to Peshawar and thence to be sent in carts or on camel's back to the frontier states. In one case, about a hundred arms including guns, revolvers and swords were seized at a Railway station in the Bombay Presidency.

24. Even to this day a class of Patans called Ut-khels of Agharabad and other places in Afghanistan commit thefts of rifles in the Punjab and present them to the Amir or sell them for high prices to other rich Maliks. Some of them have as it were a mania for firearms. In this year, 1907, a Cabulee was sentenced to one year's imprisonment under the Arms Act by the Sessions Judge, Madura, for taking a revolver and Martini Henri cartridges clandestinely from Colombo. In another case, three Cabulees were arrested at Mardan in Bengal and convicted in February 1907 for smuggling two revolvers.

Hindu associates of Cabulees.

25. It may not be out of place here to mention a few of the associates of the Cabulees from Northern India, who accompanied them long ago into the Bombay and Madras Presidencies. As Hindus, they helped them to study the topography of the different temples, houses and shops. They used to assume the names of the Cabulees and put on their disguises in their company and when occasions required, they used to put on their usual Hindu dress calling themselves Hindu-Brahmins of Marwar. They were convicted and sentenced about half-a-dozen times, each under different names in different places, till at last one of them named Banket was traced as having been implicated in a burglary case in Ganjam along with three Mussalmans of Cuttack. He died a few months ago in the Mysore Jail.

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There are others again of Northern India calling themselves Pandas of Jagannath, Benares, Gaya, Ramesvaram and Dwaraka, who take pilgrims and sweetmeat-sellers to temples and, when opportunity affords, will not fail either to give clue to others or loot the temple themselves. A gang of this class lately looted the temple of Srirangam but without the help of any Cabulees who, though scattered, were disabled by the vigilance of the Police in recent years to some extent.

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## CHAPTER V.

## IRANIES or BELUCHIES.

THIS is another troublesome tribe of wandering "Gypsies" committing crime all over India openly from the houses and shops of villages and towns, mostly in broad daylight, with impunity and escaping punishment except in rare cases.

Their origin.

2. Their native place was doubted by several officers as belonging to Beluchistan or Afghanistan as they are called by different names such as Beluchies, Herates, Sindis, Sindhi Beluchies, Mekranies,* Cabulies, Pathans, Bagdadies and Syads. But enquiries were made, under orders of the Government, by the Collector of Shikarpur and Political Agent of Kairpur in 1889 and it was found out that no Beluchi, Sindhi or Pathan Tribe would acknowledge them either as their kinsmen or countrymen; and that, when in those parts they called themselves Syads, Bagdadis, in short anything but Beluchies, Sindhies or Pathans. "Gypsies" he wrote is what they are and so far if they have any origin at all, it is probably in "Northern Persia" which is also called Iran, though they cannot be said now to have any residence or nationality. These gangs must have left their country several generations ago either owing to severe attacks of famine and pestilence as some say or they must have been socially ostracised as low caste wandering men of criminal propensities with no settled place of abode. So they migrated into British India which they heard to be a "Land of plenty."

Though they really are treated as "Foreigners," yet by their protracted and constant ramble over this vast continent

* Mekran is a province in Beluchistan.

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A GROUP OF IRANIES EFFECTING A SALE. THE FIGURE IN THE CHAIR IS THE PURCHASER.

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of India they have become presumably British Subjects. The whole of the evidence lately collected goes to show that they are like the infamous old English Gypsies, dangerous when unwatched, but timid when they know they are being watched and likely to become very harmless like the English Gypsies after a couple of generations of sharp supervision.

Their first appearance in Madras Presidency.

3. According to certain Public records of the local Government it is clear that a large party of this tribe first appeared in October 1842 in the district of the Nilgiris. Then in 1846 it was in the district of Kistna, they were the subject of a long report of the Head Assistant Magistrate of Guntur in which town these "Persians" by their daring conduct entered the houses and shops of the inhabitants in the villages on their way, pretending to be mere beggars and also frequently used threats to extort money. They were taken to Madras, the capital of the Presidency, with a suggestion that the principal men should be ordered to halt at Poonamalli and placed in the fort under a military guard, if necessary.

Their first appearance in Mysore.

4. The Superintendent of Police of Astragram division of Mysore addressed the Commissioner of Mysore, Sir Mark Cubbon, on 18th February, 1856, to the effect that the Iranie Vagrants who had left their own country on account of famine, plundered from bazaar and small villages, ghee, rice, fowl and other articles of food and a bag of Rs. 97 from one person and a handkerchief from another. On enquiry they said that they had obtained passports authorizing them to beg and that they had a right to be fed by the villagers and that they could not subsist on less than Rs. 20 each day. When the Amildar attempted to search their baggage on the 21st February, 1856, for the above Rs. 97, the gang had loaded 10 or 15 match locks with powder and ball and had crossed over the borders in a threatening manner into the territories under the jurisdiction of the Madras Government.

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5. In 1875, they formed the subject of a special report of the Inspector-General of Police, Madras, which dwelt at length on their movements and conduct, and in 1881 the Madras Government recorded a resolution on their doings in Southern India.

First conviction in Bengal.

6. In 1884, a gang passed through the Northern Districts of Bengal giving the people and the Police much trouble. In 1887 the Government of Bengal published for general information some correspondence regarding a gang of them found in the district of Lohardaga. On the 3rd July, 1888, six Beluchies were convicted of thefts at Darbhanga and ever since that day they have not been frequenting those places.

Mr. Hunt's enquiry.

7. In 1895 Mr. Hunt, Assistant Superintendent of Police, was put on special duty by the Inspector-General of Police, Madras, to make certain enquiries about this tribe and he gathered a few important materials. He traced their connection with a few Bombay merchants and sowcars from whom they got their articles of merchandise including their false coins as will be related later on.

Their approximate number.

8. According to Mr. Hunt, in 1895 these Iranies numbered about three hundred excluding women and children and were divided into about a dozen gangs. The members of each gang are closely related to each other and give and receive their women in marriage without much regard for relationship. Though their women are very prolific and their camps are filled with troublesome youngsters, yet their number does not seem to be on the increase. Owing to their constant nomadic life and the consequent exposure to heat, rain and cold, they seem to be subject to all sorts of diseases and the death rate seems rather high among them : their dirty habits and dress seem to countenance their bad health.

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9. In their frequent visits to a place, they make acquaintances with poor families of local Mussulmans and entice away grown up girls by their liberal gifts of rupees and eatables and marry or take away the girls with them. In one instance in 1894 they were taking away a Mussalman unmarried girl of about 16 years by train from Guntakul. The mother and sister of the girl came to the Railway station and complained to the Police that their girl was being taken away. When the girl was asked as to why she was going away with them deserting her mother, she stated that she would marry one of the gang and would not return to her mother. Sometimes they purchase handsome girls and bring them up to be married to members of the gang, also marry widows if they happen to come in contact. No doubt they spend to live in luxury and plenty, using wheat, ghee, mutton and fruits but owing to their frequent movements in the tropical part of the Southern India and owing to their mixture with the local races, they are gradually deteriorating in physique, color and spirit. The change is often perceptible even to such an extent that in the well-known gang of Gulam Hussein which I have been seeing for the last 15 years, of course at intervals of 3 to 5 years, I see now some dark short women and youngsters the kind of which were not there when I first saw them. They used to be very strong and some of them were good athletes and 'Pailwans,' offering in towns to wrestle with the local acrobats, but I find few or none such in these gangs at present.

Their connection with local Mussalmans.

10. A few extracts from the report of Mr. Hunt published in the *Police Gazette* of the 21st December, 1895, will be found very useful as they contain facts up-to-date as they were laid bare to him by a leader of a gang and a girl enticed away but who had been long with the gang.

11. "Each member of a gang provides for himself and his family. There is no common division of profits. If any one either through

Their constitution.



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extravagance, bad luck or laziness becomes bankrupt, the others club together and lend him a few hundred Rupees which he repays when able, but no interest is demanded. Expenses for the general benefit of the gang, such as trips to Bombay to replenish stock in trade, are contributed for by each member in equal shares.

Their Heads or Jemadars.

12. "The Jemadar of the gang is elected by common vote and he is generally the best "business" man amongst them. I use the word "business" here in a very wide sense. He has but little authority over the members of the gang who are continually squabbling amongst themselves. When a Jemadar gets too old or does not give satisfaction, he is deposed and some one elected in his stead; there are also three or four Sub-Jemadars who, when the gang splits up, take charge of a party each; and hence the confusion which sometimes arises as to the identity of a "party."

Their general conduct.

13. "The men are thorough bullies by nature, have no mercy for the weak and cringe to any one who stands up to them. The women on the other hand impress me as being more stubborn; it is they who are generally the culprits in all cases of thefts, assaults or violence of any description; with double the strength and pluck of the ordinary native of the South, they are 'cute' enough to take full advantage of belonging to the gentler sex, as very few Indians care to complain of having been thrashed and perhaps robbed by a woman. The Beluchies know this and that is why the women and for the same reason the children take the most active part in earning their nefarious livelihood."

14. The following is a statement taken from the girl referred to in a previous paragraph.

"In 1892 married one Hyder Khan, a member of a gang encamped at Bangalore at the time. There were two or three

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Jemadars, does not remember their names, remained with them for nine months. Then returned to Bangalore with Hyder Khan and another member of the gang and refused to live with him any longer, travelled with the gang to many places but being young at the time does not remember names. The members of the gang keep bunches of skeleton keys with which they enter houses and steal anything they can find. The women have pockets in the back of their skirts into which they put the things they steal. At Trichinopoly they were caught and judicially punished but they did not stop in consequence. They steal at every place they visit. They bury the stolen property under a tree or near some landmark pre-arranged, so that nothing is found if searched by Police."

15. "At Ellore after leaving Trichinopoly, the women entered the house of a Brahmin to ask for water. One of them brought out some rupees and jewels, about a handful. Those concerned divide the property amongst themselves, no general division. In bazaars whilst some are bargaining, others will steal. The women sit on the ground spreading out their skirts, slip the purloined article under them, and pass it on to another behind who takes it away. At other times they simply loot a bazaar and the people are afraid to oppose them. The women are fond of throwing their children on the ground and threatening to stamp the life out of them, if they are molested. Their manner is so apparently earnest that the villagers are afraid to approach them.

16. "They live very freely, use ghee like water. In buying ghee they have two pots, one with a soft mud bottom. This they hold out to be filled for a certain price, keeping the other one underneath. Making some excuse to loot at the ghee, they continue to pierce a hole in the mud and some of the ghee runs into the bottom pot, and if the bazaar-man suspects some trick they frighten him into filling up the top measure as agreed upon. Alludes to travelling by rail without tickets, says that they are clever at removing ornaments from fellow-passengers. Also to pilfering of

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fowls, etc.; remembers them selling coins, outside silver, inside copper. She thinks they had them when she just joined the gang; says, the Police who accompany them are fed by the gang and sometimes given presents. They are also afraid to interfere with them. Her husband endeavoured to teach her to steal. There were four or five women in the gang who were natives of this country. One left the gang at Salem. Having complained to the Police of the way in which she was treated, a "Sahib" interfered on her behalf and sent her away. One girl was a native of Nellore. "In the same way that they swindle in buying ghee, they use a double bag into which they get bazaarmen to pour rice; letting some through into bottom part, they pour out remainder and accuse the bazaarman of giving them short measure."

Their dress and ornaments.

17. Thus it is clear that without their women and children they can do no "business." The men put on a decent dress like Mussalmans, in general preferring colored clothes, and the leader or sub-leader wears a gold necklace of different sorts of mohurs or coins which they offer for sale. The other men wear silver bangles on their wrists and their women wear necklaces of silver coins and several kinds of rings on their noses and ears. Similarly the youngsters also wear silver bracelets and necklaces. Their women, the majority of them, are fair, strong and good looking, and their skirts and jackets, with pieces of cloths tied over their heads which complete their dress, are very dirty and stink considerably as they do not even wash themselves or bathe at least once in a few days.

Their Camp.

18. Their camp generally consists of a few small tents with their ropes and pegs, a few ponies, pack saddles to secure their culinary utensils, their dirty clothes, their leather or gunny bags containing their articles of merchandize, a few fighting cocks and cages of birds. They are very fond of cock fighting even on wagers of 10 to 50 Rupees on each. They train these cocks specially brought up to fight.

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IRANI ENCAMPMENT

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19. The chief *modus operandi* of the women is this : five or six of them with their youngsters go to a house on pretext of asking for a drink of water. They get into conversation with the inmates, and after a while produce coins, etc., for sale. Whilst some of them are thus distracting the attention of the people of the house, the others enter, pick up and conceal, under their skirts in which they have shelves, any small articles of value they can find. In one case lately in Berhampore Town they had robbed over a thousand rupees worth of property which has never been recovered though two Inspectors with sufficient men were deputed to investigate the case.

*Modus operandi.*

20. Their ostensible profession is merchandize dealing in the following articles :— Ponies, knives, scissors, padlocks, false stones, false pearls, trinkets of several kinds, toys, beads, quicksilver and false coins of different kinds.

Their merchandize.

The ponies trained by them are generally strong and fit for hard work. They pay no attention to marks about which the Hindus are very particular. They purchase them in fairs held periodically in several places in the Bombay Presidency and in the Central India.

In January 1904 the gang of Sadalkhan that visited Baroda with 12 men, 8 women and children had no less than 34 horses for sale and he brought them to Hyderabad (Deccan) from there. As for other articles they deal in, they are purchased at Bombay from their usual customers and in the markets whereat they find them cheaper than in any other part of India.

21. Their coins are spurious or contain a large proportion of alloy with a little silver. They used to be made for them only at Bombay by some Kathiawar Sonars, also called Parja Sonars, but now they are made according to a very recent information

Their false coins.

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also at Calcutta and at Nagpore. The coins are of four kinds (1) Ramachandar, (2) Chariari, (3) Panchathani and (4) Akbari. There are also half or small coins in these classes

Ramachandar.

Chariari, Suni.

Panchathani, Shia.

The first contains the idols of Rama and Seetha. The second contains the names of four Suni prophets : 1 Ali, 2 Obabkar, 3 Husman and 4 Umar with Kalima* on the other side. The third contains the names of five Shia prophets : 1 Alla, 2 Mohammad, 3 Fathma, 4 Hasan and 5 Bahussein. The fourth Akbari contains Kalima on one side and the name of the king on the other. The Iranies when selling these coins state that they are of pure silver and that they contain the names of great prophets. The Mahommedans and the Hindus, some of them, consider these coins as propitious or auspicious and put them on the necks of their children. They therefore are purchased often dearer than the pure silver. A few others use them as charms to their watch chains.

22. Their marches are very rapid and their halts are very short. Their presence in any village even to this day is considered a pest by the villagers. The villagers often supply carts for carrying their things to their next camp gratis. It is done not so much for fear of them as it is for getting rid of them as soon as possible owing to their troublesome conduct in many ways.

23. When they want to travel by train as they often do, they come to the Railway Station with their bag and baggage long before the appointed time and occupy the passengers' shed ; no passenger will dare approach this troublesome gang. If any one approaches, his things are not safe. If the Station

* La ilaha illalla Mahammad Rasulilla.

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Master is a mild man, they will take advantage and purchase only a few tickets and the whole gang will get into the train and fill the compartments with their dirty baggages reserving, as it were, the compartments for themselves. If the gate is not opened by the porter or the ticket collector, the youngsters will get over the fencing and get into the platform. If the Station Master is self-willed and assisted by the Police, there will be disturbance started by the women and youngsters. They will abuse and even attempt to assault, when their men including the Jamadar will arrive at the spot and beg of the officers to excuse them. Thus they gain their object. When their women and children occupy a compartment, it is not safe for any other to sit with them as the youngsters are very dexterous in removing things from pockets and bundles.

24. In small villages in which they halt, the vegetables or fruits in the gardens are not safe. When cholam, maize or sajja crop is ready with ears, the youngsters will eat it all away as so many locusts. When the youngsters are questioned by the field owners, the females go to them and settle matters, of course dealing them severe blows with their characteristic forwardness. In some small villages, they claim to be supplied for a day or two gratis. If the village heads are ignorant and timid, they collect subscription from the ryots and pay them or supply necessaries for a day or two and send them away.

25. It is admitted by all officers that their income by their ostensible profession is barely sufficient for their living or for the heavy Railway fares they often pay. It is also known well that they are troublesome to the people in many ways. It is also not possible for two or three constables, who are often deputed to watch them, to prevent them from committing crime in different ways. There are instances in which even the Police Inspectors with a number of constables failed to recover stolen property from them, knowing full well that they committed theft. Generally after a good haul, their movements are very rapid to avoid the jurisdiction of even

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the district officers. In one instance about the year 1902 for a theft committed in the Central Provinces, the officers had to wire to the Superintendent of Police, Kistna, in the Madras Presidency, to recover property and arrest a few of the gang that arrived at Bezvada, but in vain.

26. Considering the facts described in these few pages which are far from being exhaustive, it is, I think, highly necessary that these gangs should be settled somewhere as peaceful subjects, bringing them under the Criminal Tribes Act or under some special regulation as the one brought into force in connection with the tribe of Chapperbands in the Bombay Presidency. This tribe was once registered under the Criminal Tribes Act (XXVII of 1871) in the Punjab where it had a headquarters at Karnal but it does not seem to have been enforced strictly.

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## HINTS ON DETECTING COUNTERFEIT COINS.

1. A suspected coin should, if possible, be compared with two genuine coins of the same description and examined in a good light.

2. When rung on a stone slab or similar hard surface, a genuine coin should give a clear high note. Counterfeits do not, as a rule, ring well.

3. The colour of the coin should be scrutinised ; a brassy or dull leaden appearance would generally point to the coin being counterfeit. Some counterfeits have a peculiar glazed appearance. A genuine coin should be silvery and dull or bright according to the treatment it has received.

4. In a genuine coin, the thickness at the rim is made the same all round. In counterfeit coins the rim is sometimes thicker at one point than another (especially in the case of struck counterfeits), and the coin itself may be slightly bent or distorted.

5. The rim of a genuine coin is regularly milled all the way round with straight lines at right angles to the faces. All rupees minted since 1904 have 150 serrations or teeth in the milling. In counterfeits the lines of the milling are often at a slant, the distances between the lines are irregular and the lines (or ridges) themselves uneven and broken. This is a most important test. The milling can best be examined by placing the suspected coin between two good ones (of the same descriptions, so that the rims of all the three are close together and can be seen at the same time. Defects can then be readily detected.

6. The beading on the inner side of the rim of the coin should be even and regular all round, the pearls being uniform in size and shape, and equidistant from each other. On counterfeits the pearls are often badly shaped, uneven in size and spaced at irregular intervals. A peculiarity of some counterfeits is that the pearls are very small and far apart, but this is also the case in some genuine coins of 1840.



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7. The devices on the obverse and reverse should be clear and well defined. Blurred lines or edges and an imperfect impression (unless plainly due to wear and tear) are suspicious.

8. Letters and figures of the inscription should be clear, well defined and sharp edged. Blurred, irregular or double lines are to be regarded with suspicion. In some counterfeits the letters are much thinner than on genuine coins.

9. The plain surface of the coin (*i.e.*, the portion not occupied by device or inscription) should be smooth, even and free from blemish. An uneven, spotted or rough surface is suspicious.

10. The edges of the rim should be smooth to the touch. Rough jagged edges are suspicious.

11. All cast coins are counterfeits. In a cast coin the surfaces may be granulated or pitted with minute pin holes which appear as black spots to the naked eye, but can be felt with the point of a needle or pin. The milling is often defective, especially, at the point where the metal was poured into the mould. The letters and figures in cast coins nearly always present a rounded appearance instead of having square sharp edges.

12. A counterfeit coin will generally be found to exhibit at least two of the faults indicated above. A coin should not be condemned for only one fault unless it is very marked.

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